

REVIEW

JANUARY 2026

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22 BRIDGING THE GAP FOR JERSEY CITY STUDENTS

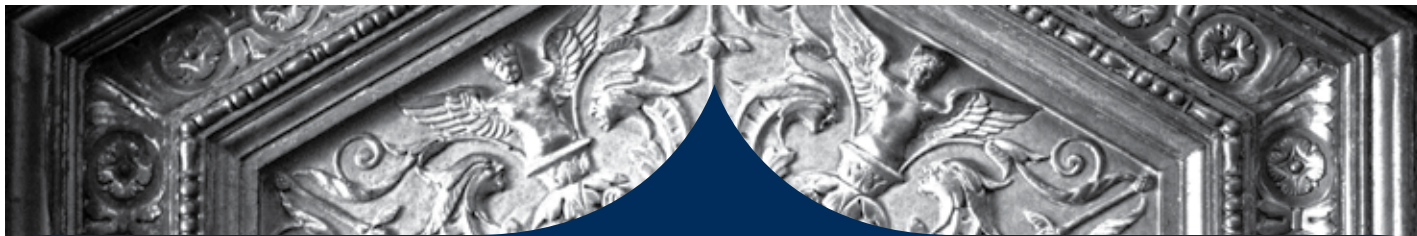
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- Special Education with Supervisor Endorsement 
- Teacher of Students with Disabilities 

Leadership

- Principal, School Administrator 
- Supervisor 
- Educational Leadership (EdD)



Explore Our Programs!



MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY



More than 100 NJEA members, leaders and staff joined NJEA officers to hand-deliver 112,000 petition signatures and urge legislators to pass the Tier 1 for Everyone bills.



Vineland Education Association member Amy Murie, a 26-year veteran in education, shared a photo with her daughter, Megan Murie, a first-year biology teacher and a member of the Kingsway Education Association at the NJEA Convention.



FEATURES

22 BRIDGING THE GAP FOR JERSEY CITY STUDENTS
From restarting preschool to expanding sign language access and hosting the annual Bridging the Gap event, Jersey City's Martin Luther King PS 11 is building inclusion, celebrating student success and strengthening community partnerships for Deaf and hard of hearing students.
 By Linda Miller



26 WHAT TO EXPECT FROM GOV. MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor Mikie Sherrill's agenda emphasizes equity in education, fully funded pensions, opposition to school vouchers, pandemic recovery and youth mental health initiatives. Partnering with Lieutenant Governor Dale Caldwell, her administration pledges accountability, innovation and collaboration to strengthen New Jersey's schools and support educators statewide.
 By Aaron McClendon



28 NJEA MEMBERS DRIVE CHANGE IN LOCAL AND STATE POLITICS
NJEA members are advancing educator voices in politics by volunteering, endorsing candidates, supporting initiatives and running for office. Their grassroots organizing secured statewide and local election victories while strengthening public education and providing safer and healthier schools.
 By Marybeth Beichert

30 HARRIET TUBMAN'S CAPE MAY CONNECTION
Harriet Tubman Museum ambassador Crystal Hines re-enacts Tubman's Cape May history, connecting students and visitors to her abolitionist roots, Civil War heroism and local African American history while emphasizing representation, resilience and Tubman's enduring legacy.
 By Kathryn Coulibaly



32 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 – or to get more involved.



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Unions feed people



The number 700 lbs.

The amount of food donated by NJEA members at the NJEA Convention in Atlantic City. The food was donated to help feed families in the Atlantic City community and surrounding areas.

Source: NJEA



Did you know? Free financial check-up



Every NJEA member has access to a free financial check-up with an NEA Retirement Program Financial Advisor. Learn more at neamb.com/start.



Great things are happening for Deaf and hard of hearing students at Jersey City's Martin Luther King PS 11.

PHOTO BY
Jennifer Larson

REVIEW



180 W. State St., P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211 • 609-599-4561 • NJEA.org

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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: \$1,127 (full time); \$225.40 (full time *low-earner); \$563.50 (part time); \$563.50 (on leave); \$225.40 (part time *low-earner). Active supportive: \$534 (full time); \$106.80 (full time *low-earner); \$267 (part time); \$106.80 (part time *low-earner); \$267 (on leave). Retired professional: \$97; \$1,850 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$50; \$905 (retired ESP life); NJAEA \$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 2025-26 is \$23,800.



President's Message



In a new year, our mission remains the same

As we begin a new year, let's restore our commitment to the transformative power of public education. As educators, we foster environments where every student has the chance to succeed and feels, on a deeply personal level, a sense of academic passion and purpose. We move young people forward; we make a difference.

This year, we will fight for and win progress that matters for our schools, students and union members. Together, we enter a new era as our state has elected a new, pro-public education governor dedicated to supporting public schools. As educators, we helped elect Mikie Sherrill and, after her swearing-in, will work with her on the issues that matter most to us, our students and our communities.

While the numbers on the calendar change, our mission remains the same: support public schools and protect the dignity and respect that our work deserves.

We must continue to fight for fair health benefits and pension justice by moving all NJEA members into Tier 1. Tier 1 represents the highest level of pension benefits in our state; it provides a secure future for our educators.

Achieving this goal means better financial stability. When educators have the security offered by long term financial stability, our schools will grow and thrive.

Additionally, improving evaluation practices, reducing the educator shortage and securing the resources our schools deserve remain our top priorities. The impact of the educator shortage extends far beyond individual classrooms, threatening the quality of education across the state.

In this issue of the NJEA Review, you'll read about NJEA members making a massive difference in our schools. You'll read about a teacher working to "bridge the gap" between Deaf and hard of hearing students. You'll read about what to expect from a public-school employee's point of view under the leadership of Gov. Sherrill. Among other stories, you'll learn how educators are making a difference in their communities in countless ways.

Let's use our knowledge and solidarity to create real change. Join your fellow members as we advocate for dignity, respect and progress in our schools.

Solidarity forever,



officers online

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: What a great day. Tier 1 for Everyone! A huge turnout in a sea of red for ed. Tier 1 for Everyone! Members organizing and stepping into their collective power. Tier 1 for Everyone! Showing policymakers that our issue is just and that we will not go away, with 112,000 signatures on petitions. Tier 1 for Everyone! I'm proud and humbled to be a leader and member of the NJEA, engaging in the good work for the necessary and deserved benefit of all our members and organized labor. Thank you to all the members who signed the petition, came to Trenton, wore red to school, sent an email and are ready to do more. And thank you to our staff, Denise Policastro and Tina Dare, for spearheading our efforts, as well as our prime sponsor, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson. It starts here — much to do in getting this done. #SolidarityForever

On Dec. 5, NJEA President Steve Beatty shared images from NJEA's Pension Justice Day of Action and reflected on the magnificent work that members and staff did to make it a success.

PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalforNJEA: Thank you to every member who wore red, walked the Statehouse, or signed a petition to fight for pension justice. Thank you to all the legislators supporting Tier 1 for Everyone. And a huge thanks to the prime sponsor of A-5158 and A-5160, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and the prime sponsor of S-3997 and S-3998, Sen. Linda Greenstein.

NJEA Vice President Petal Robertson shared a reel combining images and video clips from NJEA's Pension Justice Day of Action. More than 100 NJEA members visited the Statehouse to deliver 112,000 signed petitions to legislators and urge them to pass bills A5158/S3997 and A5160/S3997 to enact Tier 1 for Everyone.

TINA DARE

Facebook

@TinaDareforNJEA: Thank you to every member who showed up in Trenton today or wore red at work. Your action matters — and it's already making an impact in this fight. If you haven't yet, please take a moment before the day ends to take action. The link is in the comments.

On Dec. 4, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Tina Dare shared images from NJEA's Pension Justice Day of Action. She asked members to complete the "Pension Justice for Everyone!" take action to contact their representatives in the NJ Assembly and Senate and urge them to sponsor and pass the critical Pension Justice bills A5158/S3997 and A5160/S3997 during this year's lame duck session.

The ADVOCATE

RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Become an NEA RA delegate

The 2026 NEA RA to be held in Denver

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 Denver, Colorado from July 3 to July 7. Delegates are expected to arrive in Denver on July 2 and depart on July 8.

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 also elect NEA's president, vice president and secretary-treasurer, as well as elect members to the NEA Executive Committee. If any vacancies occur in Executive Committee positions, these may also be filled at the NEA RA.

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 their candidacy.

For all election-related rules, visit njea.org/NJEAelections.

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.

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 2026

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. 26 – Election Committee Mandatory Meeting

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

Feb. 1 to Feb. 27 – As established by NEA

- Feb. 1: NEA RA online self-nomination begins at 12:01 a.m.
- Feb. 27: NEA RA online self-nomination closes at 11:59 p.m.

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

Feb. 27

- Deadline for county and unit nomination registration for NJEA Executive Committee, Delegate Assembly, and Delegate Assembly Alternate with election-vendor (Intelliscan) by county or unit designee
- Deadline for receipt of online self-nomination forms for state delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (11:59 p.m.)

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.)

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, 2026, at the address supplied with the ballots.

April 23 – Election Committee mandatory meeting to validate election results

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

May 1 – 2026-27 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 15, 2026.
- 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.

COOL STUFF



TEENARTSNJ OPEN CALL FOR STUDENT ARTISTS

Creative Change Makers is an annual open call to artists, grades 9-12, seeking to submit work inspired by the theme that year, in literary, visual, or performing arts. Students may submit as an individual artist, collaborative group artists, or community arts advocates artists. This year's open call category is Sustainable Arts: Creating with Consciousness.

This will result in a group art exhibition in the spring each year. The exhibition will feature visual artwork, such as painting, sculpture, installation, etc. There will also be a video screen on display, featuring recorded performing art pieces, spoken word and documentation of projects. Performing artists will be invited to perform onsite. There will be at least one additional artist talk, panel discussion, additional live performance event, or workshop with participating schools and students during the exhibition. The exhibition, and all events corresponding with it, are free and open to the public.

For more information, visit teenartsnj.org/what-is-creative-change-makers.



FREE CLASSROOM MATERIALS FOR THE SEMI-QUINCENTENNIAL

Looking for materials to use in your classroom as we approach the celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, our nation's historic milestone, on July 4, 2026? Check out and order free posters "America By the Numbers" and "Road to Revolution" and NJSBF's new publication *Founding Documents of the United States*, which includes the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Visit 250independence.njsbf.org.



NJHOF PROVIDES STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES AND EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter

Subscribe to the New Jersey Hall of Fame's (NJHOF) educator at bit.ly/NJHOFeducator.

Field Trips

At the New Jersey Hall of Fame (NJHOF), bring inspiration to life with an unforgettable, standards-aligned field trip exploring New Jersey's most outstanding achievers in arts, science, public service, and more. Trips are booking fast for 2026. Reserve now to secure your date. For questions, email learning@njhalloffame.org.

2026 Areté Scholarship and essay contest

The application window for our 2026 scholarship programs is now open. Encourage students to apply at NJHalloffame.org/learn.

Free Professional Development with Montclair State University

Join NJHOF at American Dream for two dynamic professional development sessions presented in partnership with Montclair State University's ADP Center for Learning Technologies and Network for Educational Renewal. Participants will earn professional development hours.

Civic Leadership and SEL: Lessons from NJ Changemakers

Feb. 4, 4:30 p.m.

Connect stories of civic leaders to social-emotional learning and civic action.

Media, Identity, and Voice: From Radio Waves to Reels

Feb. 18, 4:30 p.m.

Discover how New Jersey innovators shaped storytelling and how to integrate media into classroom learning.

Learn more and register at njhalloffame.org/learn.



LAW FAIR/LAW ADVENTURE COMPETITION ENTRY DEADLINE IS JAN. 31

The New Jersey State Bar Foundations' Law Fair and Law Adventure mock trial competitions help to fulfill the new State mandated civics education requirements. In these competitions, students and their teachers write original mock trial cases according to rules NJSBF provides. Visit mocktrial.njsbf.org for competition rules; speakers' PowerPoint from our October 21 Law Fair/Law Adventure workshop; quizzes, videos and past winning cases.

Register for Free Event in May - Law Fair/Law Adventure – You be the Jury!

Experience what it is like to serve as jurors with your students (Law Fair for Grades 3-6 and Law Adventure for Grades 7-8). Hear cases performed by winners of this year's competitions. After hearing the cases, you and your students will deliberate and render verdicts. Events will be held at the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick, NJ. Multiple days and sessions available. Visit mocktrial.njsbf.org.

A+ EFFORT

COOKIE DOUGH, THE CLASSROOM RABBIT, MAKES PRESCHOOL LEARNING SWEET

For the students and staff at Slaybaugh Primary School in Egg Harbor Township, classroom pet Cookie Dough has star status.

Lisa Milstead, a preschool teacher at Slaybaugh, is Cookie Dough's proud guardian. Now in her 26th year in education, Milstead adopted Cookie Dough seven years ago from a rabbit rescue as a pet for her daughter. Since 2024, she's been bringing Cookie Dough into her classroom to help her students with a variety of social-emotional and academic benefits.

"I had the idea to bring Cookie Dough into the classroom because I thought the students would benefit from a classroom pet," Milstead recalls. "The curriculum encourages it, so with the approval of administration and permission from all of the parents, Cookie Dough made his debut."

Cookie Dough, and the students, quickly took to the arrangement.

"The students love to brush him and read to him," Milstead says. "Cookie Dough has the run of the classroom, and the students are very gentle with him."

Cookie Dough is not always gentle with the classroom, however. Countless books and papers bear his tell-tale nibbles, and he is a menace to electrical cords. During nap time, he has to be restrained from jumping on the cots.

Research shows that classroom pets benefit students in a variety of ways, especially in preschool.

Having a classroom pet can help build empathy and compassion, reduce anxiety and stress, build responsibility and help improve social skills.



In addition, students' curiosity about pets can lead to discussions on a number of topics. Measuring Cookie Dough helps teach about math. Feeding him helps students understand different habitats and life cycles. Reading and writing about rabbits leads to improved language arts.

In addition, studies indicate that classroom pets can increase student engagement and motivation and improve attendance.

For Milstead and the students and staff at Slaybaugh School, Cookie Dough is a valuable part of the school day, and Cookie Dough relishes his role.

"Cookie Dough loves being in the classroom. He hates coming home on Fridays. He just loves the attention!"

Creating a comforting environment so students can succeed

Meet Bergen County ESP of the Year Debby Wolanski

By Kathryn Coulibaly



For Debby Wolanski, a paraprofessional at Hoover Elementary School in Bergenfield and the 2025-26 Bergen County ESP of the Year, her life changed when a member of her family was identified as having special needs.

“By the time I began working in the district, I was very comfortable dealing with social and academic issues for my own family member,” Wolanski recalls. “I felt

that I would be a good support for other children and families.”

Fifteen years later, Wolanski still loves her work. She has been assigned to students from first through fifth grades.

“I love being able to come into a classroom and identify what the students need,” Wolanski says. “That can change from one moment to the next. Sometimes, they need help with assignments. Sometimes, they need to take a walk. I like the newness of working with different children every day and seeing what I can do to help them.”

Wolanski, who grew up in Bergenfield and raised her own family in the community, sees the value of the “village” that the school community has become.

“Every morning, I go in and say hello to everyone. I visit

with the students with whom I’ve previously worked. I think it’s very important for people to feel seen and valued. We all have a part to play.”

Wolanski spends a lot of time learning new strategies to help students.

“Academics are important, but the social part is so necessary for students, as well,” Wolanski says. “Mindfulness is priceless at times for students.”

Wolanski didn’t anticipate working in education but is glad she landed at Hoover Elementary.

“Growing up, I was very family-focused,” Wolanski recalls. “I love being there for people. I’m one of five children. I never thought about working in public education, but I fell into it because of my family member. There was an opening in the district, and it all cascaded from there. But I’m grateful that I am here because I love working with the students and staff.”

Wolanski was aware that her colleagues were nominating her for ESP of the year and was touched by their recognition.

“I’m the longest-serving paraprofessional in the school, so I try to help the new paraprofessionals, the teachers and the students,” Wolanski says. “We’re all a community and we need to work together to help one another and to support the students. However we got into education, we’re all here because we want to be, and I want to be supportive of everyone as much as we can.”

Kathryn Coulibaly writes the monthly ESP column. She is an associate director in the Communications Division.

Maintaining the school with military precision

Meet 2025-26 Burlington County ESP of the Year John Meyer

By Kathryn Coulibaly



John Meyer spent more than 20 years in the Navy before ultimately transitioning to a career as a custodian in Pemberton's public schools. This year, his hard work and contributions were recognized when he was named the 2025-26 Burlington County ESP of the Year.

"No one goes into custodial work for the pay," Meyer says. "The reward is the smile and thank you.

One person can truly make a difference, and I choose to be that person."

After retiring from the Navy, Meyer worked in a variety of other fields. His wife, Nancy, a teacher in Pemberton, urged him to consider working for the district. Meyer asked her what custodians did. She said they were responsible for cleaning schools and keeping them safe. He laughingly replied, "Oh, you mean Navy work."

Meyer started as a substitute custodian at Denbo-Crichton Elementary School.

"I had so much fun," Meyer says. "Who knew that cleaning was fun? I'm a prankster and I love bantering, so I fit in with the staff. Six months later, there was an opening, and I was hired as a night custodian."

Eventually, a daytime position opened, and Meyer jumped at the chance to have the same schedule as his wife, and to be able to do more union work.

Now a head custodian back at Denbo-Crichton, Meyer also serves as one of the vice presidents of the union, primarily responsible for the maintenance, custodial, grounds and kitchen workers.

"We have about 700 members in our union, and more than 250 of them are educational support professional members," Meyer says. "I'm responsible for 79 ESP members. I've been a vice president for four years and I'm happy to help give them an even stronger voice."

Meyer also is in charge of the buildings and grounds at Denbo-Crichton, a responsibility he takes great pride in.

"This school is state-of-the art," Meyer says. "It's got beautiful lighting and clean walls. Maintaining it is a challenge, but we're meeting the challenge. You can't be an outstanding custodian without a great team. I have a great team, and they meet or exceed expectations."

Meyer's wife knew he was being nominated for educational support professional of the year, but she kept it quiet.

"I'm uncomfortable with accolades," Meyer says. "I come in and do my job. If colleagues see me working and they thank me, then I'm happy."

Nancy was one of the colleagues who wrote a letter nominating Meyer for the honor, a fact that pleases him.

"Knowing my wife brags about me means a lot," Meyer says.

While Meyer could retire at any time, he plans to continue working in the schools for a few more years.

"It's a rough time for a lot of people in education right now. My job is to put a smile on the face of everyone."

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Federal restrictions on commercial driver licenses based on immigration status

By Kaitlyn Dunphy

UPDATE: On Nov. 10, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit issued an administrative stay of the federal government's interim rule described in this article. This means the rule cannot be enforced at this time. In other words, the categories of noncitizen Employment Authorization Document holders identified below can operate under, receive and renew their CDLs and CLPs.

Note that this is a temporary stay, not a final ruling on the merits of the case. The court issued the stay to allow time to review the case. It can issue an order at any time lifting or modifying the stay. At the time of publication, the stay is in place, but readers should check for updates.

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced a new interim rule changing the citizenship requirements for Commercial Driver Licenses (CDLs) and Commercial Learner Permits (CLPs). The rule was announced Sept. 26 and would have gone into effect Sept. 29.

According to the American Immigration Lawyers Association:

- Only individuals in lawful employment-based nonimmigrant status — such as H-1B (specialty occupation workers), L-1 (intracompany transferees), O-1 (individuals of extraordinary ability), E-2 (treaty investors), and H-2A or H-2B (temporary agricultural or nonagricultural workers) — are now eligible to hold a CLP or CDL.
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD)-only holders, such as refugees, asylees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders and pending Adjustment of Status (AOS) Form I-485 applicants, are no longer eligible for CLPs or CDLs.
- Noncitizen applicants, except U.S. permanent residents, must provide an unexpired foreign passport and an unexpired I-94 or I-94A Arrival/Departure Record indicating one of the specified employment-based nonimmigrant categories every time a CDL or CLP is issued, renewed, transferred or upgraded.
- States must immediately pause issuance or renewal of nondomiciled CDLs and CLPs until their processes comply.

“

The court's stay means CDL and CLP holders can continue working — but the future remains uncertain.

- States are required to query immigration status through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system prior to issuance.
- Each CDL or CLP must expire no later than the driver's authorized period of stay (Form I-94/94A date) or within one year, whichever is sooner.

State motor vehicle commissions are required to upload application documents into the Department of Homeland Security's immigration system and keep copies of applications for two years. Employers are likely to confirm CDLs for compliance with this new rule.

At the time of publication, the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission had not posted guidance regarding the rule. The U.S. DOT has issued a fact sheet (see below.)

On Oct. 20, AFT, AFSCME and Public Citizen Litigation Group filed a petition challenging implementation of the interim rule in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. NEA submitted public comments opposing the rule prior to the Nov. 28 deadline.

If you or your members are impacted by this rule, reach out to your local leadership and your NJEA UniServ field representative. 📍

Additional resources on the proposed restrictions



Proposed regulations



American Immigration Lawyers Association alert



US DOT fact sheet

Kaitlyn Dunphy is an associate editor of NJEA Legal Services and Member Rights in the NJEA Executive Office. She can be reached at kdunphy@njea.org.

the NJEA REPORT

Recess Day: Partnerships that deliver a statewide impact

By Stephanie L. Natera-Smith, MSW, LCSW

In partnership with Rutgers University, NJEA's annual Recess Day opened with a street-festival vibe: a DJ played outside, stilt walkers towered above the crowd, mimes cruised along the walkways and several other activities set an upbeat tone.

The statewide event drew more than 6,500 people, the largest audience in Recess Day history, as students, families and educators gathered at Rutgers University's Jersey Mike's Arena. From the first song to the final cheer, the energy never changed. Sneakers squeaked on the hardwood, whistles cut through the music, a spirited game of Simon Says drew roars and a steady chorus of laughter.

Spotlighting partnership and community

Recess Day is designed to spotlight community partnerships and invite educators and students to experience a day of fun and connection while recognizing the 2025–26 State and County Teachers of the Year. The collaboration with Rutgers University connected K–12 students from districts throughout the state with a major higher education institution and showed how coordination among schools, universities and community groups can create opportunities that last beyond a single school day.

Travel to the arena reflected the statewide reach. Buses arrived from districts throughout New Jersey, from communities large and small. The flow of arrivals kept the arena buzzing as schools checked in, found their sections and joined the pregame festivities.

From the opening tip-off, students, educators and families stayed engaged with performances from the band, cheerleaders and the women's basketball team. Between timeouts and media breaks, student sections led call-and-response chants and dancing and singing students were shown on the jumbotron.

Participation even extended to the floor. Dozens of educators took part in a friendly basketball shootout of "musical basketball," trading layups in front of students who cheered on every shot. The contest added a light competitive moment that highlighted the day's theme of



NJ County Teachers of the Year take the court at Rutgers Recess Day.

connection through play. Student mascots from visiting schools also joined Sir Henry, Rutgers' mascot, on the sideline, waving to the crowd, dancing in a conga line, posing for photos and high-fiving young fans. Their enthusiasm stood out, and their willingness to step into the spotlight at such a young age was admirable.

Honoring excellence in education

The celebration honored excellence in the profession, as well. The 2025-26 County Teachers of the Year and Gillian Ober, NJ State Teacher of the Year, were recognized at the end of the first quarter. The acknowledgments linked the joy in the stands to the daily work in New Jersey public schools and highlighted some of the educators who make that work possible.

Giveaways throughout the day sent school-spirit items home with students and staff, reinforcing pride and community. Students left with keepsakes that will remind them of a day centered on movement, belonging and school spirit.

The program concluded with a Rutgers women's basketball win! For many students, it was their first opportunity to experience a live college game and to root for the home team.

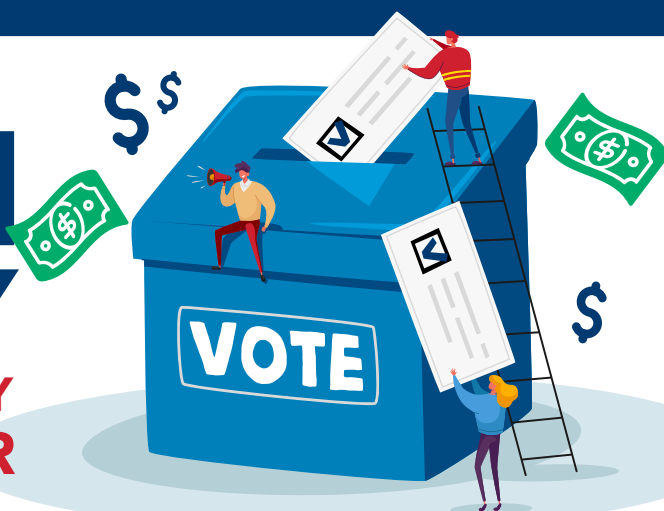
Recess Day highlighted that joyful school cultures and New Jersey's public schools go hand in hand. After a record-setting turnout and a home-team victory, NJEA and Rutgers University cannot wait to see so many more faces next year.

See more of Rutgers Recess Day at njea.org/rutgersrecess.

Stephanie L. Natera-Smith is an associate director in the Communications Division. She can be reached at snatera@njea.org.

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New Jersey is actively seeking residents to serve as poll workers for primary and general elections.



WHY SHOULD I APPLY?

By staffing a polling location, you will:

- Earn \$21.43 per hour on in-person early voting days and \$300 on Election Day. Individual counties may provide additional compensation.
- See our great democracy in action, firsthand, and enjoy the feeling that comes with contributing to your local community, your state and your country.



WHO CAN APPLY?

You can apply to serve as a poll worker in New Jersey if you:

- Are a United States citizen and a resident of New Jersey.
- Are a registered voter in the county in which you reside.
- Are at least 16 years of age. College and high school students are encouraged to apply. **Note:** Those under 18 years of age will work limited hours per shift and do not have to be registered to vote. Contact your County Board of Elections for further information. <https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-county-election-officials.shtml>
- Are not running as a candidate in this election.



WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- You may be asked to work during the in-person early voting period and on Election Day. Hours and days may vary.

APPLY NOW!

<https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/pollworker.shtml>



Boardwalk Run results

Runners in the 46th annual NJEA George M. Adams Boardwalk Run streaked across the finish line early Friday morning at the 2025 NJEA Convention.

Maggie Muir and Kevin Jacobsen were the fastest overall female and male members in the run. NJEA staff member Brian Rock crossed the finish line just ahead of Muir.

It's never too early to start training for the 47th annual Boardwalk Run, which kicks off at the 2026 NJEA Convention on Friday, Nov. 6.



Runners compete in the 46th annual Boardwalk Run during the NJEA Convention.

Bib #	First Name	Last Name	Time
152	Brian	Rock	20:47
269	Maggie	Muir	22:07
155	Kevin	Jacobsen	23:49
166	Michael	Caracci	24:16
167	Jonathan	Lyon	24:18
156	Brennen	Jacobsen	24:26
277	Brenda	Julian	26:16
168	Casey	Finch	26:22
150	Micheal	Yannone	26:45
148	Devin	Menker	27:08
151	Raymond	Vikete	27:20
157	Kevin	Flood	27:32
161	Michael	Joyce	28:15
276	Lise	Bjerkehagen	29:04
149	Ted	Tympanick	29:22
275	Michele	O'Neill	29:31
278	Jennifer	Russ	31:24
279	Carly	Alburtus	32:06
158	Ryan	Griffin	32:46
273	Lori	Esak	32:55
272	Christina	Boyle	33:26
270	Kimberly	Bouchard	34:11
164	Pete	Moran	34:45

Bib #	First Name	Last Name	Time
153	Robert	Wrate	35:36
271	Bernadette	Bennett	36:05
154	Matthew	Ulrich	36:27
274	Vicki	Holst	38:33
1129	Kevin	Li	38:38
162	Alex	Dobrowolski	38:40
280	Liz	Ruppel	39:48
1133	Amanda	Ruppel	39:53
1131	Andrea	Golamy-Sadig	46:24
163	Joseph	Cozzi	46:43
1112	Meredith	Yannone	47:44
160	Ron	Burgess	50:27
159	William	Indek	54:18
1114	Naritza	Richards	56:40
1116	Shirley	Henry	1:01:29
1121	Donna	Sabol	1:01:30
1120	Lauren	Greenfield	1:01:31
1117	Christine	Candarella	1:01:32
1126	Roshele	De Los Santos	1:02:08
1134	Lois	Lawson-Brid-dell	1:02:20
1122	Stephen	Whitehead	1:02:22
1128	Michael	Tedesco	1:02:51
1132	Gary	Salahudin	1:03:43



Maggie Muir and Kevin Jacobsen were the top female and male members who finished the race.

Bib #	First Name	Last Name	Time
1113	Sharon	Ortiz	1:05:48
1124	Mary Ellen	Iradi	1:09:29
1125	Fred	Iradi	1:09:32
1130	Terry	Manning	1:16:41
1135	Marpessa	Bell	1:18:24
1119	Andrea	Bonanno	1:18:42
1127	Rachelle	Pittman	1:24:24

Hunterdon County EA holds annual superintendent-president luncheon

By Kimberly Crane

A tradition of building community

The Hunterdon County Education Association (HCEA) held its annual luncheon for superintendents and association presidents on Oct. 8 at the Mountain View Chalet in Asbury.

The event continued a tradition that has brought district superintendents and union leaders together for more than half a century. What began in 1967 as a simple gathering has become one of the county's most valued events.

The luncheon creates a space where superintendents and presidents sit together, share a meal and start the school year grounded in communication.

"More than half of our local presidents usually attend," said HCEA President Sue Vala. "We all come together to break bread and set the tone of goodwill for the school year."

Vala noted that the luncheon's longevity has created a culture that renews itself year after year. "When new presidents or superintendents come on board, people reach out to let them know that this is an event they will want to attend."

Finding common ground

For Vala, the luncheon provides an intentional reset point for everyone in the room.

"No matter what happened last year, we start fresh," she said. "Our theme for several years has been 'What do we have in common?' and the truth is, even if we don't see eye to eye, we are all here for students."

Vala recalled her own nerves as a new president decades ago. "My first luncheon was in 1999, and it was a little scary. I remember thinking, 'What are we going to talk about?' But sitting with other presidents and superintendents ended up not being awkward at all."

That sense of connection resonates with leaders across the county, including Trina Lahman, president of the Quakertown Education Association of Franklin Township.

"This event allows presidents and superintendents to come together, collaborate and speak to other districts," Lahman said. "We hear about what's going on and what's



The Hunterdon County Education Association Executive Board. From left: Carol Rocha, Molly Esposito, Emily Burfeind, Sue Vala, Ron Burd, Trina Lahman and Ian White

challenging. It gives us time to be together and share, district to district."

Starting the year this way, she added, sets a powerful tone. "It's inspiring and positive. There's usually a great speaker, and it fosters a good start to the school year."

Building trust and connections

For Lahman, the most lasting benefit is the trust built in the room. "It really does build rapport between employees and the superintendent. Communication is everything, and this event opens those lines in a natural, respectful way."

Jessica Latanzio-Crespo and Jamie Friedel, co-presidents of the Clinton Education Association, described the luncheon as a rare opportunity to reconnect with colleagues from across the county.

"Hunterdon County is small," Latanzio-Crespo said. "So it's wonderful to see familiar faces and talk about what's going on in each building."

Friedel emphasized the importance of scheduling the luncheon during the school day. "We're both working parents. It can be hard to attend after-hours events, so we really appreciate the effort that goes into finding coverage so we can be here."

As the tradition continues at the Mountain View Chalet, one message remains clear: In Hunterdon County, building relationships isn't just encouraged — it's embedded, valued and celebrated.

Kimberly Crane is an NJEA Communications Consultant and former president of the Highland Park Education Association. She can be reached at kcrane@njea.org.



Communications Awards for Excellence winners

At the 2025 NJEA Convention, local and county associations were recognized for excellence in three award categories. Photos are available at [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/).

Most Effective Use of Communications Tools to Achieve a Goal

Local associations (501 or more members)

First Place: Cherry Hill Education Association

Award of Distinction: Atlantic City Education Association and Irvington Education Association

County associations (8,001 or more members)

First Place: Essex County Education Association

Best Website

Local associations (501 or more members)

First Place: Clifton Education Association

County associations (8,000 or fewer members)

First Place: Cape May County Education Association

County associations (8,001 or more members)

First Place: Bergen County Education Association

Award of Distinction: Essex County Education Association and Passaic County Education Associations

NJREA

First Place: Bergen County Retirees Education Association

Best Newsletter (print or electronic)

Local associations (500 or fewer members)

First Place: Englewood Teachers Association

Local associations (501 or more members)

First Place: North Brunswick Township Education Association

Award of Distinction: Irvington Education Association

County associations (8,001 or more members)

First Place: Essex County Education Association

Award of Distinction: Bergen County Education Association

NJREA

First Place: Middlesex County Retired Educators Association

Award of Distinction: Bergen County Retirees Education Association

Stockton hosts future educators conference

That teaching is an excellent career choice was the message of an Oct. 22 conference at Stockton University for high school students considering a career in education. Organized by the university's School of Education, students from high schools across South Jersey from Burlington to Cape May counties participated.

Dr. Stacey Culleny, who serves as the adviser to Stockton's chapter of the New Jersey Aspiring Educators Association (NJAEA), invited NJEA staff to present one of the four workshops that students cycled through over the course of the day. NJEA also provided lunch for students and presenters at the conclusion of the event.

"What we want you to take away from today is that you see the teaching profession as something that is valued, something that is a privilege and that it's not just a job," Culleny told the students. "And even if you decide not to pursue a career in education that you value it and you value the people who do choose that career."

Every generation renews the profession

Atlantic County Teacher of the Year Christa Delaney, a science teacher at Egg Harbor Township High School, delivered the keynote address. She led off by telling the hundreds of high school students in the audience that the education profession constantly renews itself because of what new teachers bring with them. She said new teachers inspire her, especially because they are willing to question the way

things have always been done.

"As every generation [of new teachers] comes in, you bring a whole new set of experiences with you," she said. "That's why we need you to continue along this path. We need your creativity. We need your ideas. We need your perspectives. We need teachers who reflect the diversity of their students. We need teachers who understand the power of empathy. We need teachers who can adapt, lead and inspire."

She did not sugarcoat the challenges that educators face: lessons that flop, students who struggle to grasp a concept, the effort to maintain a work-life balance and more.

"But there's the other side of that truth," Delaney said. "The rewards are immeasurable. You will collect stories, memories and relationships that stay with you. And your students will remember you long after you've left the classroom."

She reminded the future teachers in the audience that students won't remember all the behind-the-scenes work that teachers do, but they will remember the experiences educators provide.

"If you ever want to make a difference, if you ever want to do work that matters every single day, teaching offers you that opportunity," she concluded. "I can promise you with my whole heart that teaching is worth it."

Benefits of teaching

While Delaney inspired students with a message of why teaching is a great career, NJEA staff members Eda Ferrante and Stephanie Tarr presented students with the practical

aspects of how educators can make a living working in New Jersey's public schools. The state's average salaries—and significant for future teachers, average starting salaries—are among the highest in the nation. They discussed health benefits, defined-benefit pensions, the school calendar, professional growth and the many benefits and protections found in a collective bargaining agreement in a state with strong union protections.

Ferrante and Tarr built upon Delaney's message, noting that "teaching in New Jersey is a career that rewards your passion and changes lives." They also shared the role NJEA plays in supporting educators and encouraged students to join NJAEA when they ultimately reach a college campus.

In another workshop, current Stockton University School of Education students shared their experiences as students preparing to become teachers. In yet another, Lenape High School Principal Tony Cattani, Lenape teachers Christina Colangelo and Arianna Robinette, Lenape school counselors Claudia Wolf and Shannon Conte, and Lenape students Izzy Dickerson, Lindsey Doyle, Christian O'Neill and Dylan Wilson focused on the impact educators make through supporting students academically, socially and emotionally. Finally, another set of Stockton University students led the high school students on an abbreviated campus tour.



For photos from the day, visit [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/albums).

Future Educator course teachers and club advisers

We want to hear from you!

The New Jersey Future Educators Association (NJFEA) is now part of NJEA as the association expands a statewide program for high school students interested in exploring careers in education.

NJFEA would love input and support from NJEA members who either advise future educator clubs or teach courses for future educators.

NJFEA will host a focus group dinner the Friday of each upcoming NJEA Winter Leadership Conference (WLC) to hear your thoughts, learn what your students who are potential future educators need, and understand how we can best support the educators guiding them. You need not otherwise be attending the WLC to attend the dinner.

Winter Leadership (WLC) dinner dates and locations are below. The dinner will not necessarily be held in the same hotel as the conference, but at a restaurant nearby. The dates and locations of the conferences are:

- South: Jan. 30, 2026 (Atlantic City)
- North: Feb. 20, 2026 (Parsippany)
- Central: March 6, 2026 (Somerset)



Scan this QR code for a brief survey and to indicate your interest in attending the dinner. Even if you choose not to attend the dinner, please complete the survey. Contact NJFEA at futureeducators@njea.org for more information.

Beatty named to Governor-elect Sherrill's education transition team

NJEA members have a seat at the table

Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill has appointed NJEA President Steve Beatty to her education policy transition team. This appointment benefits NJEA members statewide and shows Sherrill's commitment to supporting public schools and the union members who serve them.

With this appointment, Sherrill is keeping her campaign promise to include educators in school decisions. This is a crucial step to ensure educators' voices are heard throughout Sherrill's term.

Beatty is known for his commitment to meeting teachers and educational support professionals (ESPs) from every community in the state. He will be instrumental in reviewing existing policies and laws. He will also help shape the new administration's vision for strong public schools. With this appointment, Beatty will advise Sherrill on critical issues important to public schools and those who work in them. These issues include pension funding, health benefits for public employees, school funding, staffing

shortages, evaluation practices and curricular implementation.

"I commend Governor-elect Sherrill for bringing NJEA to the table," said NJEA President Steve Beatty, reflecting on the honor. "Educators are experts on challenges—and opportunities—facing our public schools. Our teachers and educational support professionals work tirelessly to educate young people. Whether it's testing, evaluation, school funding, or any other issue facing public education, our members understand the issues on a deep, professional level. I am excited to bring their ideas and opinions to the table as we continue our work to restore respect and dignity to our public schools and the entire labor movement."

By appointing Beatty, Sherrill signals her strong commitment to maintaining a collaborative relationship with public school and labor leaders. Sherrill campaigned on supporting the middle class and working with everyday working people to improve New Jersey. And with this action, she's taken her first step toward proving it.

Jersey City Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program bridges the gap

By Linda Miller



Michele Martinez works on spelling with students G'Ahni Gonzalez and Veronica Kerolos.

The Jersey City Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program has served students for decades, originally at PS #27 and later with a high school class taught by a deaf teacher. Many of our adult graduates—from the 1970s to today—remain connected to the program. Four years ago, the program moved to Martin Luther King, Jr. School PS #11. Today, 800 students are enrolled. Since 2014, alumni and members of the deaf community return annually to join our students, families and staff for community events.

When I was hired in September 2014, I noticed the program was isolated from the school community. Although invited to events, true access was missing. Some students wanted friendships beyond their classroom, and it became clear that building community and partnering with deaf

organizations was essential. I also recognized the need for deaf role models to support our students' identity, culture and personal growth. These shifts helped the program expand.

Learning together, growing together

Today, we have four self-contained classes—PreK, K-2, 3-5 and middle school—serving 13 students, and we provide additional support for deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled throughout the district. Our students learn alongside their general education peers during specials, lunch, recess, events and trips. Some participate in general education all day with the support of a teacher of the deaf (TOD) and interpreters. Although our school has hundreds of students, our DHH students function like a close family, building relationships with each other and with their peers.

Linda Miller is a speech-language specialist in Jersey City Public Schools and advocate for Deaf and hard of hearing persons.



Jennifer Guimaraes is working to build greater independence with students Mya Perez, Kori Harreld and Jazi Rosero.

Our team includes five teachers of the deaf, including one itinerant TOD who supports students across the district. This year we welcomed a deaf paraprofessional who has brought tremendous warmth and representation to our program. I am currently the only bilingual American Sign Language (ASL) Speech Therapist in Jersey City.

Supporting students and families

Districtwide, there are more than 12,000 deaf and hard of hearing residents, with 857,000 statewide. The need is growing. We currently have one deaf family—both parents are alumni—and their four-year-old daughter is now a student. Most of our families are hearing. They must navigate the unique challenge of understanding their child’s communication needs. Some students only sign at school because signing is not used at home. Several are bilingual or multilingual. We have students who speak English, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali and Urdu, so we tailor communication support accordingly. I am learning Spanish to better support a new student in both English and ASL.

Over time, our families have become more involved, recognizing that hearing loss is not a barrier but simply a difference. We provide resources and guidance so students can access services beyond the school day. We use the



Some of the posters used to help all students and staff learning ASL.



Tanez Karai works one-on-one with student Kaylee Marquez.

total communication approach—using sign language, voice, or both—allowing students to communicate in the way that best fits them. This method has supported significant academic and social growth.

Signs of change

To build an inclusive school culture, I began offering basic sign language classes every Friday morning for staff who want to learn. It has been rewarding to see staff and students using signs in the hallways. I am excited to restart the student Sign Club, as well.

One of our proudest connections is with program graduate Thyson Halley, now the event coordinator at the Newark Public Library. Since 2015, he has generously returned each year to share his knowledge, support our students and serve as a role model.

People often ask how I entered this field, assuming it began with a deaf family member. In 1995, I saw an interpreter on PBS and became fascinated. I planned to study interpreting, but when I enrolled at William Paterson University, I discovered only two sign language classes

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To me, this is more than a program—it is a family.

existed. I shifted and earned my degree in speech therapy, later completing an interpreter training program in 2013. In that program, I met Thyson, who helped me grow in language, culture and community. We’ve been friends ever since.

To me, this is more than a program—it is a family. My long-term vision is for all deaf and hard of hearing students in Jersey City to have access to a comprehensive Pre-K through 12th grade program staffed with the people, resources and support they deserve developed and implemented by our deaf and hard of hearing program. I believe we are well on our way.

An in-depth look at the program



Restarting the preschool program

In September, we were able to restart our preschool classroom, a critical step to providing students with the resources and support they need on day one of their educational careers.



Sign of unity

For several years, our team has worked to secure a sign outside the school identifying that deaf and hard of hearing students are part of our community. This year, we finally started off the school year with a sign in place. This helps our community helpers and partners know that we serve students with hearing loss.



Building community

Posters line the hallways with basic signs to help administration, staff and students communicate with the children in the program. Bus personnel are instructed on basic signs to support communication. Sign language lessons are provided weekly.



Read Across America

We welcomed Dr. Latisha Porter, one of our community partners who is hard of hearing, to our school's Read Across America event. *Dr. Porter shared her book series, Mighty Hearoes: Tales of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Champions*, with the students. This event provided students with a role model in their community who is achieving great things, inspiring them to dream big.



Bridging the Gap

The annual Bridging the Gap event is held in May during Better Speech and Hearing month. The event celebrates unity, resilience and the power of breaking barriers. The annual event gives students the opportunity to meet former alumni who have graduated from the program, creating a supportive network of community partners beyond the school.



Take a closer look at Jersey City's Deaf and hard of hearing program.

Visit njea.org/bridgingthegap

Video courtesy of Danielle Earle and Chris Curto, NJEA Communications.



Community support

The program enjoys support from administration and the community. We welcome many alumni from the start of the deaf and hard of hearing program dating to 1982. We look forward to connecting with more of our alumni each year.



Sign Club

Staff noticed that DHH students were struggling to communicate with their hearing peers during lunch and recess. In September 2018, the Sign Club was established, welcoming all middle school students who wanted to learn ASL after school. Many participants shared that they had deaf or hard of hearing family members and neighbors. They were eager not only to bridge communication gaps with classmates, but also with family and friends outside of school. The Sign Club quickly grew in popularity, with strong weekly attendance and enthusiastic students making rapid progress in ASL.

Unfortunately, many DHH students are not able to participate because the club requires members to either walk home or be picked up by their parents. Since DHH students live across Jersey City, they require bus transportation at the end of the school day. This is a barrier to participation that we are working to remedy.



Sierra Spaulding signs with student Tobias Nieves.

What to expect from Gov. Mikie Sherrill

By Aaron McClendon



Mikie Sherrill will enter the governor's office on Jan. 20 with a new Legislature and a bold agenda to transform the way New Jersey operates, promising significant reforms to make our government more efficient and accountable to taxpayers. So what can NJEA expect from an incoming Sherrill administration?

Expanding access to education

As governor, Mikie Sherrill will focus her education agenda on expanding quality and opportunity for New Jerseyans while minimizing costs for the taxpayer. Sherrill praises New Jersey's schools as the best in the nation but is deeply concerned with systemic inequities that undermine student success. Major priorities for her administration include providing all school meals at no cost to students, modernizing and stabilizing the school funding formula, and making affordable early childhood education available to all New Jerseyans. She is also deeply committed to combatting school segregation and will likely work to expand access to regional magnet schools and reinvest in the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program. Sherrill also shares NJEA's support for vocational education and can be an important ally in our efforts to ensure our students enjoy access to vocational-technical learning.

Pensions: A promise of security

While on the campaign trail, Sherrill repeatedly committed to fully funding public employee pensions during her administration. During one of her campaign debates, she criticized the state for inconsistently funding the pension system and pledged to keep it solvent and secure for the public servants who paid into it. Sherrill also voiced her concerns about pension injustice, calling the policy that forces educators out of their pensions for two-year breaks in service an unfair practice that punishes new parents. In 2025, NJEA successfully advocated for legislation that protected members in TPAF from losing their pension benefits after a two-year break-in-service, and with Sherrill's support we have the potential to successfully do the same for our members in PERS.

Standing firm against school vouchers

School voucher programs divert public funds into scholarships for private schools. Like NJEA, Sherrill is staunch in her opposition to the use of public dollars for private education and instead calls on New Jersey to make stronger investments in our public schools. Her stance on this issue will become important, as Congress just created the nation's first federal school voucher program, which allows individuals to donate to state-approved Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) in exchange for a federal tax write-off.

SGOs can fund a variety of education-related expenses, but the program is intended to benefit private schools and eventually inspire state-funded voucher programs. While the ultimate cost of this program will depend on how many states and individuals participate, experts estimate that the program could cost the U.S. up to \$51 billion in tax credits that could otherwise support public education. The good news is that governors must voluntarily opt-in to the program before SGOs can operate in their state, so Sherrill's continued opposition will be critical in reducing

Aaron McClendon is an associate director in the Office of Politics and Policy in the Government Relations Division. He can be reached at amclendon@njea.org.

the damage this program will have on our federal budget. It's an opportunity to make her a great partner in NJEA's efforts to prevent a similar program from draining public funds in New Jersey.

Recovering from the pandemic

Sherrill's take on the crises impacting education in New Jersey is also influenced by her experience as a parent of school-aged children during the pandemic. Sherrill has a deep respect for educators for providing critical social engagement for kids during the outbreak of COVID-19 and made combatting pandemic learning loss one of her top priorities while she was in Congress. We can expect Sherrill to champion the expansion of high-impact tutoring and mental health services to help schools confront the long-lasting impacts of the pandemic on student outcomes and behavioral health. To address the teacher shortage, Sherrill will likely promote high impact tutoring and the student teaching stipend, a top issue for aspiring educators, as channels to help recruit new educators into the field.

Confronting the youth mental health crisis

During a gubernatorial debate, Sherrill named the youth mental health crisis as one of her top concerns as a parent. In her New Jersey Online Safety Agenda, Sherrill outlined her plan to tackle the growing impact of social media, addiction and technology on the behavioral health of New Jersey's children. Sherrill proposed enacting an Age Appropriate Design Code that would ban online ads targeting children and restrict the collection of their personal data. She also supports banning the use of cellphones during class time, creating a Social Media Addiction Observatory to study best practices for promoting online safety for children and using curriculum and public awareness campaigns to instruct parents and children on the responsible use of technology, social media and artificial intelligence tools.

As Sherrill and Caldwell step into leadership, New Jersey's educators and families face a moment of real possibility. With bold commitments to equity, accountability and investment in public education, the new administration signals a partnership that can reshape the state's schools and strengthen the teaching profession.

For NJEA members, this is not just a change in leadership, it is an opportunity to work alongside allies who value educators as the cornerstone of New Jersey's future. The months ahead will test how vision translates into action, but the promise of collaboration offers hope for lasting progress. 🌟



Meet Lieutenant Governor-elect Dale Caldwell

Lieutenant Governor-elect Dale Caldwell is no stranger to education, or public service. The son of a teacher and a civil rights activist, the Boston native is a graduate of Princeton University, earned his MBA from Wharton and his doctorate in education administration from Seton Hall. Caldwell is walking into the State House with a strong background in public leadership and education in New Jersey. Before running with Mikie Sherrill, Caldwell was the President of Centenary University, served on the New Brunswick Board of Education for 26 years and was a member of the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey, where he administered shared services agreements for school districts in Central Jersey.

As New Jersey's next lieutenant governor, Dale Caldwell is the second-highest ranking official in the state and will serve as acting governor in the event that Gov. Sherrill is unable to perform her duties. The lieutenant governor is required to lead a major state agency, so Caldwell also serves as Sherrill's secretary of state. In this role, Caldwell oversees some of the most critical government operations for New Jersey, including our elections, small business initiatives and programs supporting economic tourism, civic engagement and the arts.

Since winning office, Caldwell has been enthusiastically engaging with NJEA. In addition to rallying with members at our Government Relations Booth during the NJEA Convention, he also met with President Steve Beatty and NJEA's county and local presidents at the All Presidents' Meeting. While addressing our members, Caldwell reiterated Sherrill's commitment to educators and unions and spoke about their shared priorities of make testing more efficient, devoting more funding for our students and reforming our education to better align with New Jersey's workforce needs.

Caldwell reaffirmed his belief in the power of educators in changing young people's lives for the better and expressed a special interest in partnering with teachers in economically challenged communities to connect younger New Jerseyans with the education they need to enter the workforce with competitive skills.



NJEA MEMBERS DRIVE CHANGE IN LOCAL AND STATE POLITICS

By Marybeth Beichert

NJEA members across the state bring their skills, dedication and expertise to school districts every day. They advocate for their students and public education, volunteer their time, and work with parents to ensure that every student has the resources and opportunities needed for success.

However, decisions that impact education, students and the education profession are made by elected officials at the state and local level with little to no input from NJEA members.

From classrooms to campaign trails

Educator voices matter and this past November, NJEA members used theirs when they volunteered for Mikie Sherrill's campaign, interviewed and endorsed candidates for their local school board or municipal government, and some made the commitment to run for office themselves.

In this past election, NJEA members volunteered throughout the state to elect candidates who shared their values, and their efforts paid off. In fact:

- 59 of 67 NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates for state Assembly (and one Senate seat) won their election.
- 171 of 232 NJEA members running for office were successful in their race.
- 42 of 57 endorsed candidates won at the local level.

Mr. Angelozzi goes to Trenton

One of the most closely watched races in the state was the race for Assembly in Legislative District 8 (LD 8) by NJEA member Anthony Angelozzi. Angelozzi, who was endorsed by NJEA members, is an 18-year history teacher from Atlantic County, president of the Hammonton Education Association and a UniServ Consultant. This was his second run for assembly and his first win in a district that was represented by a Republican for 50 years. He knew it was going to be a tough race, but he had spent 10 years behind the scenes volunteering with the Atlantic



NJEA President Steve Beatty helped campaign for LD 8 candidate and Hammonton EA President Anthony Angelozzi on his successful election bid.

County Democratic party helping to coach and educate candidates on education policy, fundraise, phone bank and canvass. In his first run for Assembly, he knocked on 6,600 doors. His hard work and values helped to earn him NJEA's endorsement.

During this election cycle, he knocked on over 8,600 doors, sharing one-to-one conversations with potential voters about work experiences, his knowledge of state politics and other kitchen table issues that impact families like his every day.

Marybeth Beichert is an associate director in the NJEA Communications Division.

Angelozzi believes in leading by example, and when volunteers—many of them fellow NJEA members—saw that he had spent most of the year canvassing five to six days a week they wanted to be part of his campaign. Angelozzi believes his role as a public educator and union member brings a unique perspective to his new role as a state representative. “I plan to work with all stakeholders to address affordability issues, school funding and the importance of strengthening unions,” Angelozzi said.

Local involvement can make the difference

The November election saw an increase in local association political involvement. And that is a good thing considering the power elected officials have in decision making. Many local associations across the state used their influence to help elect school board members and pass referendums that will have a direct impact on students.

Unlike an endorsement of candidates at the state and federal levels, the decision by an association to engage in local politics is strictly made by the local association members. The governing body of the association decides if they want to screen candidates, set the guidelines of the process and include the decision in the minutes of a representative council or general membership meeting. Locals work with their UniServ field representative or Government Relations member organizer for guidance on procedures to make sure the decision reflects the values of the association.

Hopewell Valley pushes for safe schools

For John Grimaldi, president of the Hopewell Valley Education Association (HVEA), the decision to support a district bond referendum came down to ensuring that students and staff had a safe and healthy environment conducive to learning.

The referendum included repairing and renovating roofing, HVAC systems and student bathrooms as well as additional classrooms at two elementary schools. For years, students at the elementary school had been taught in outdated classrooms and trailers that were over 30 years old. With the help of NJEA staff, HVEA sent out targeted communications to all NJEA members who lived in the district asking for their support. Collaboration with the superintendent and the public support of the referendum from HVEA helped with its passage.

“Taking an active role in local politics is critical for delivering value to one’s membership,” Grimaldi said. “It can sometimes be messy, but local politics affects working conditions within a district, and every local needs to take that into account when developing a strategic plan with their executive teams.”



North Brunswick Township EA President Beth Passner with NBTEA-endorsed candidates for school board. From left: Jason Carter, Zaire Ali, Passner and Barbara Cepeda.

North Brunswick navigates endorsement challenges

The North Brunswick Township Education Association (NBTEA) has been endorsing school board candidates for the last few years. Beth Passner, president of NBTEA, agreed that while endorsing candidates can reap benefits, especially when the endorsed candidates win, “It is not without its risks or challenges.”

Passner recalled the first time the local made an endorsement. “There were many in the community who did not understand why we were endorsing candidates when we had never done so before. We simply responded, “Who is better to make recommendations for the local board of education than the professionals who work in the school and see the daily challenges our schools face?”

Because of their organizing efforts on behalf of their endorsed candidates, NBTEA saw two of their three candidates win their seats in November.

Grassroots organizing powers statewide wins

This past election for governor was critical for NJEA members and public education, and members stood up for their values. Their volunteerism included 92 phone-banks that resulted in more than 50,000 phone calls, 30 canvasses statewide and more than 30,000 text messages to fellow NJEA members about the importance of the election.

There is no doubt that NJEA organizing helped NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates across the finish line. In light of the federal government’s decision to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, it will be more important than ever to have a governor and state and local representatives who stand up for public education and the value that it brings to New Jersey families. 🇺🇸

Examining Harriet Tubman's Cape May connection

By Kathryn Coulibaly

Crystal Hines brings history alive. An ambassador with the Harriet Tubman Museum of New Jersey and a physical education and health educator in Middle Township, Hines conducts tours at the museum and reenacts Tubman's story, enlisting volunteers from the audience to portray Tubman's parents, spouse and others who helped her along the path to freedom.

Using minimal props and costumes, Hines transports visitors back to the early 1850s, when Tubman worked in Cape May to fund her missions to freedom.

"I used to attend Macedonia Baptist Church in Cape May," Hines says. "They talked about getting the museum approved. On Juneteenth 2021, they opened the museum. I visited a month later and knew a lot of the history because my stepfather is a descendant of William Still, an abolitionist and author from Burlington County. He is known as the Father of the Underground Railroad. By the end of my visit, the museum's executive director handed me a job application."

Living history in Cape May

Located at 632 Lafayette St. in Cape May, the museum sits on a block that was once the center of the town's abolitionist activity. The Stephen Smith House stands diagonally across from the museum. It was the summer home of Smith, founder of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. Next door was the Banneker House, a hotel developed by James Harding, a friend of Smith's, and one of the only summer resorts for free Black people in the country.

"There was a booming African American population on Lafayette Street, but due to urban renewal and gentrification, many of the properties were claimed by the city," Hines says. "Property owners moved to West Cape May, which was very rural, or they were forced to leave Cape May altogether."

Hines began giving tours during the summer but quickly expanded her role year-round. During the school year, she is available at the museum on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to

Kathryn Coulibaly is an associate director in the Communications Division. She can be reached at kcoulibaly@njea.org.



Middle Township EA member Crystal Hines is an ambassador at Cape May's Harriet Tubman Museum.

4 p.m. She also travels to schools, libraries, community centers and churches to share living history. Hines has performed in Pennsylvania and across New Jersey and has conducted additional research about Tubman's life in Maryland, where Tubman—then known as Araminta Ross—grew up. She has plans to provide tours in Washington, D.C., Delaware, Maryland and New York.

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She was a war hero, a general, a fugitive, a wife, an abolitionist and so much more.

Tubman's time in Cape May

Historians say Tubman worked in Cape May between 1850 and 1852. The resort town was a meeting point for Northerners and Southerners. Abolitionists and free African Americans from Philadelphia and the East Coast traveled to Cape May by daily steamer or twice-weekly stagecoach. Southern plantation owners from Maryland and Virginia arrived by boat, often bringing enslaved people. The mix was often volatile.

One of Hines' favorite stories to tell is Tubman's achievements as the first female Civil War general.

"Tubman saved more than 700 people," Hines says. "She wasn't a typical leader, but she put in the work. She was a war hero, a general, a fugitive, a wife, an abolitionist and so much more. Her opponents could not find her, they could not stop her, and they could not beat her spirit down. That's what makes her story so powerful."

The work of Rev. Robert O. Davis

The museum also highlights important events and people from Cape May's African American history. Many of the objects and art showcased were collected and donated by Rev. Robert O. Davis, former pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church, who traveled extensively in Africa.

"Rev. Davis brought people together," Hines says. "He used his skills as an orator and singer to tell our history. He traveled, collected and shared what he learned with the people in this area. Through his efforts, he uncovered a lot of history to the advantage of Cape May."

A renaissance woman

Hines sees parallels between Tubman's history and her own. Both survived near-death experiences. At 13, Tubman was struck in the head by an iron weight thrown by an overseer, fracturing her skull. She lived with headaches, seizures, memory loss and narcolepsy for the rest of her life. Hines was hit by an 18-wheeler and dealt with major health issues similar to Tubman's after her recovery.

"My priority as a teacher is representation," Hines says. "My students need to see someone who looks like them and who has many varied interests and skills. I'm a physical education and health educator, a poet, a liturgical dancer, a mom, an athlete, a sports fan, a historical reenactor, and most importantly, a mom."

"I've been called a 'renaissance woman,' and that's true of Harriet Tubman. She was a nurse, a spy, an abolitionist, an orator and a singer. I tell my students not to put themselves into a box. Having varied interests allows me to approach my students from different angles because maybe they're interested in some aspect of what I'm doing, too."

Hines says helping to tell Tubman's story has brought many different people into her life.

"I've met descendants of Harriet Tubman and William Still and a close friend of Malcolm X," she says. "People from

across the world have visited the museum. I appreciate everyone I've met as a result of this work, and I urge everyone who can to visit the museum and learn more. I have come to realize my own strength through the opportunity to tell Harriet Tubman's story. It makes me realize how far we've come, and how far we have yet to go." 📍



Hines brings Tubman's story to life at the museum, reenacting pivotal moments from Tubman's amazing life.



Visit Cape May's Harriet Tubman Museum

The museum is closed during January. To learn more and plan a visit, go to harriettubmanmuseum.org.



See Crystal Hines in action at the Harriet Tubman Museum. Visit njea.org/tubman

Video courtesy of Danielle Earle, NJEA Communications.

NJEA Organizational Directory

NJEA OFFICERS



President
Steve Beatty



Vice President
Petal Robertson



Secretary-Treasurer
Tina Dare

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: John Sassi, Sue McBride; Burlington: Tamara Beatty; Camden: Laurie Gibson-Parker; Cape May: Tammi Lee; Cumberland: Louis Russo; Essex: Sharon Ortiz; Gloucester: Ryan Griffin; Hudson: Diane MacKay; Hunterdon: Susan Vala; Mercer: Christine Sampson-Clark; Middlesex: Jennifer Herrick,

Melissa Vega; Monmouth: Steven Koumoulis; Morris: Kerri Lee Farrell; Ocean: Lisa Simone; Passaic: Marco Martinez; Salem: Colleen Gilmartin; Somerset: Amy Salinger; Sussex: Carla Mancuso; Union: Ann-Margaret Shannon; Warren: Laurie O'Brien; Higher Ed: Tobyn DeMarco; NJREA: Kitty Sausa; Non-Classroom Teacher: Marie Battist-Rock; NJAEA: Madison Baca

State Officers: Steve Beatty, Petal Robertson, Tina Dare

NEA State Directors: Brenda Brathwaite, Theresa Fuller, Lauren Greenfield, Christine Hewitt, Laurie Gibson-Parker, Temika Langston-Myers, Barbara Rheault, Mark Richards, Stacy Yanko; NEA State Director at Large: Charles Wilson

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, Barbara Rheault, Maryam Sarhan, Lateefah Scott; Bergen: Jennifer Clemen, Mariann Kronyak, Howard Lipoff, Sue McBride, Shari Mendelson, Laurie Murrell, Kathleen Nathan, Anthony Rapetti, Yolanda Salazar, Michael Warren, Michael Yannone; Burlington: Christopher Bowman, Melissa Foremny, Christine Hewitt, Brenda Martin-Lee, Jason Pope, Kelly Wilcox; Camden: Lisa Campisi, Ebony Freeman, Sturac Meyers, Dianna Morris, Janelle Mungro, Kimberly Robinson-Taylor, John Senft; Cape May: Stacey Salerno, Jay Wynn; Cumberland: Nicole Carminati, April Stevenson-Kinder, Dr. Tiffanie ThrBak; Essex: Christine Candarella, Jessica Cavagnaro, Joseph Dedalonis, Michael Dias, Keith Hinton, Louann Lobasso, Michael Tedesco; Gloucester: Collin Aregood, Eileen Healey, Melba Moore-Suggs, Salvatore Randazzo, Stephen Whitehead; Higher Ed: Peter Helff; Hudson: Daniel Abbadessa, Adam

Anderson, Rachel Blue, Daniel Granda, Erin Mooney, Marquisha Reynolds, Gene Woods; Hunterdon: Robin Kiefer, Carol Rocha; Mercer: Jonathan Chichilitti, Talithea Duncan, Donald Estrada, Agueda Porras, Daniel Siegel; Middlesex: Nicole Del Popolo, Daniel Fields, Joseph Landolfi, Carolyn Muglia, Frank Paprota, Emmanuel Preko, Timothy Simonitis, Michael Wildermuth, Lois Yukna; Monmouth: Casey Barilka, Christina Jannarone, Denise King, Michael Marino, Sarah Reichenbecher, Michael Reilly, Mary Scott; Morris: Lee Ann Brensinger, Angela Cordova, Ann Marie Finnen, Aatifa Hammond, Malani Leitzel, Lisa Mangione, Laura Rivera; NEA Director: Brenda Brathwaite; NJREA: Joanne Palladino, Kitty Sausa, John Zurka; Non-Classroom Teacher: Stephanie Ross; Ocean: Kevin Bliem, Ronald Donnerstag, Jaclyn Finnigan, Karen Hopson, Nancy Jubert, Susan Morgan; Passaic: Kelli Buckalew, Brenda Carswell-Avery, Marvin Fields, Nicole Fuller, Theodore Graham, Heather Potts, Robert Sarti; Salem: Jennifer Lehr, Amy Tighe; Somerset: Nicky Neeraj Badlani, Andrew Coslit, Daniel Epstein, Marisol Espinoza, Gayle Nelson; Sussex: Gerda Bakker, Angela Deluccia, Ann (Vicky) Smith; Union: Lillian Alston, Lakhia Carter-Blocker, Carlos Esquivel, James Frazier, Kim Haynes, Julie Klikus, Kelee Mitchell-Hall, Tonya Scott-Cole; 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: Marie Mchugh, Malissa Ridley, Tomeka Sanderlin, Stacey Sweeny; Bergen: Dave Bradler; Burlington: Keturah Harris; Camden: Rosemarie Casey, Tyeisha Jefferies, Madeleine Leach, Jeannie Long, Sharita Stinson; Cape May: Catherine Krause; Cumberland: Nicole Kinsey, Christopher Mohan; Essex: Michael Byock, Jamae Sippio, Christal White, Leah White; Gloucester: Lisa Bakota, Shereen Ducasse, Shannon Pizzuta, Robert Scardino; Higher Ed: Michelle Perkins; Hudson: Andrew Bove, Geidy De La Rosa, Lisa Dunn, Richard Geissler, John Marques, Barbara Young; Hunterdon: Katherine Beggiato, Margaret

Eposito; Mercer: Jesse Ambriz, Maryjo Nagy, Twanda Taylor, Melissa Watros; Middlesex: Kevin Bloom, Asela Laguna Mourao, Andrew Lewis, Kim Scott, William Smith, Maureen Strzykalski, Susan Waldron; Monmouth: Thomas Ballard, Casey Barilka, Allison Connolly, Niurka Coy-Bush, Meghan Fitzsimmons, Elizabeth Lieberman, James St Angelo; Morris: Eugene Behme, Mark Eckert, Nanette Fandino Diaz, Enrique Manlapid, Kathleen Paterek, Patricia Ressler; Non classroom teacher: Anne Richardson; Ocean: Cheryl Berman, Karen Hopson, Nancy Jubert, Susan Wiemken; Passaic: Trent Johnson, Selina Lawson, Diane Neavill, Todd Pipkin, Charles Wilson; Salem: Jennifer Jenkins, Amy Tighe; Somerset: Martin Deutschman, Patrick Frain, Renee Heller; Sussex: Carla Brunelle, Patricia Trentanelli; Union: Carolina Londono, Tanya Martin-Cooper, Thomas O'Reilly, Fern Perez-Gani, Alissa Valiante; Warren: Scott Elliott, Valerie Gary

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: Atlantic: Heather Flaim; Bergen: Anthony Rapetti, Thomas Schram; Camden: Frederick Cuneo; Cape May: Walter Johnson; Essex: Catherine Kondreck; Gloucester: Stephen Whitehead; Hudson: Marquisha Reynolds; Mercer: April Locato; Monmouth: Brittany Natoli; Morris: Nanette Fandino Diaz; NJREA: Barbara Toczek; Passaic: Kelli Buckalew; 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: Tina Dare, Gloucester

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; Cumberland: Erika Wright; Essex: Christine Candarella; Gloucester: Melba Moore-Suggs; Higher Ed: Peter Helff; Hudson: Kevin Reed; Hunterdon: Susan Vala; Mercer: Sandra Herrington; Middlesex: Michael Wildermuth; MLR Committee Chair: Brittany Lamb; Monmouth: Casey Barilka; Morris: Lisa Lamendola; NJREA: Anita Schwartz; Ocean: Kathleen Hall; Passaic: Carolyn Hobbs; 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 Instruction and Professional Development committees to disseminate information to the profession.

Chair: Dayna Orlak, Bergen

Staff contact: Elisabeth Yucis

Associate Staff Contact: Krista Orellana

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: Victoria Neron; Morris: Mark Henaghen; NJREA: Martin Sharofsky; Passaic: Megan King; Somerset: Fontella Best; Sussex: Christopher Cook; 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: Sandra Herrington, Mercer

Staff contact: Michael Flynn

Associate Staff Contact: Christie Procell

Atlantic: Maryam Sarhan; Bergen: Fanny Cruz-Betesh, Julia Guttilla; Burlington: Jason Pope; Camden: John Senft; Cape May: Walter Johnson; Cumberland: Michael Morton; Essex: Christine Candarella, Joseph Dedalonis; Gloucester: Kevin Jablonowski; Higher Ed: Mecheline Farhat; Hudson: Rosanne Versaci; Mercer: Jenna Bailin, Middlesex: Chiarina Guzik; Monmouth: Jacqueline Kruzik, Yanci Merkel, Sarah Reichenbecher; Morris: Christopher Hurd

NEA Directors: Theresa Fuller, Laurie Gibson-Parker, Lauren Greenfield, Christine Hewitt; Temika Langston-Myers, Barbara Rheault, Mark Richards, Stacy Yanko; NEA Director at Large: Charles Wilson III; NEA Senior Director: Brenda Brathwaite; NJAEA: Susan Giordano; NJREA: Susan Clark; Ocean: Philip Martin; Passaic: Tara Temprano; Salem: Robert Fitzpatrick; Somerset: Gayle Faulkner; Sussex: Kelsey Cole; 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 Stevens Lopez
Camden: Madeleine Leach; Essex: Dwight Holmes; Gloucester: Denise Dawson; Hudson: Tracey Maye; Hunterdon: Robin Kiefer; Mercer: Henry Hill; Middlesex: Valerie Nelson; Monmouth: Gail Maher; Morris: Lee Ann Brensinger; NJREA: Ronald Burd; 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 Fcolleen6. 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: Denise Mungiole; Higher Ed: Mickey Dickenson; Hudson: Ronald Cuffy; Mercer: Marlana Ventura; Middlesex: Devin Menker; Monmouth: Erika Kerwin; Morris: Guada Jacob; NJREA: Cynthia McCray; Ocean County: Mitchel Gertner; Passaic: Shaye Brown-Crandol; Salem: Regina Colon; Somerset: Patrick Fran

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 Stevens Lopez
Bergen: Laurie Murrell; Burlington: Melissa Foremny; Camden: Sturac Meyers; Cape May: Stacey Salerno; Mercer: Agueda Poras; Monmouth: Christina Jannarone; Passaic: Robert Sarti; Somerset: Andrew Coslit

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: Steven Tetreault, Monmouth

Staff contact: Kathy Coulibaly

Associate Staff Contact: Sara Ream

Bergen: Claudette Peterkin; Essex: Amanda Best; Gloucester: Salvatore Randazzo; Hudson: Linda Miller; Mercer: Hussain Haqq; Morris: Enrique Manlapid; NJAEA: Antonio Hernandez; NJREA: Miriam Reichenbach; Passaic: Sonya Squitieri; Somerset: Fawnya Gibson; Union: Rebecca Zarabi

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: Nancy Cogland, Middlesex

Staff contact: Vacancy

Associate Staff Contact: Sabrina Moore

Atlantic: Jayne Carmen; Bergen: Rommy Buttafuoco; Burlington: Sandra Wilcox; Camden:

Sharita Stinson; Cape May: Kenneth Bassett; Cumberland: Kathie Lynch; Essex: Sabina Ellis; Gloucester: Roberta Rissling; Hudson: Marquisha Reynolds; Hunterdon: Katherine Beggato; Mercer: Kevin Megill; 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: Troy Holdcraft; Bergen: Thomas Schram; Burlington: Christopher Bowman; Camden: Jeannie Long; Cape May: Tiffany Lively; Cumberland: Leah Fahber; Essex: Shirley Henry; Gloucester: Lisa Dolby; Hudson: Sheryl Allen; 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: Kelly Salerno; Union: Lisa Palin

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: Vacancy

Associate Staff Contact: Brenda Julian

Atlantic: Maryam Sarhan; Bergen: Rick Gladstone; Burlington: Saidah Johnson; Camden: Phyllis Ade; Cape May: Shawna Mulford; Cumberland: Carmen Porter; Essex: Ashley Favato; Gloucester: Kristy Martin-Siewert; Hudson: Robert Powers; Mercer: Rhonda Williams; Middlesex: Arlene Baum; Monmouth: Elizabeth Lieberman; Morris: Anjali Kallianpur; NJAEA: Kylie Shenton; NJREA: Shirley Hicks; Ocean: Ronald Donnerstag; Passaic: Regina Ladson; Salem: Meghan Thomas; Somerset: Gayle Faulkner; Union: Kim Haynes

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 policymaking 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: Dan Epstein, Somerset

Staff contact: Francine Pfeffer

Associate Staff Contact: TBD

Atlantic: Alice Carcilli, Katharine Watson; Bergen: Howard Lipoff, Christopher Sheridan; Burlington: Christine Hewitt; Camden: Katherine Morris; Breanna Ratkevic; Cape May: Cynthia Rosenberg, Stacey Salerno; Cumberland: Sherman Denby, Temika Langston-Myers; Essex: Christopher Cannella, Nickarson Paul; Gloucester: Vito Mazzeo, Anthony McCurdy; Hudson: Rosanne Versaci, Gene Woods; Hunterdon: Devon Emerick, Ian White; Mercer: Agueda Porras, Grace Rarich; Middlesex: Timothy Simonitis; Monmouth; James St. Angelo, Erin Wheeler; Morris: Brian Adams, Mark Eckert; NJAEA: Susan Giordano; NJREA: Susan Maurer; Ocean: Karen Hopson, Richard Ryan; Passaic: Tanisha Barkley-Johnson, Todd Pipkin; Salem: Leslie Wright-Pinheiro; Somerset: Henry Goodhue, Brittany Hamilton; Sussex: Carla Brunelle, Angela DeLuccia; Union: Joanne Barrett; Warren: Erin Durkin

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: Laura Rivera, Morris

Staff contact: Thomas Predale

Associate Staff Contact: Felicia Tard

Atlantic: John-Fred Crane; Bergen: Susan Dziob; Burlington: Melissa Foremny; Camden: Marisol Charernsook; Cape May: Catherine Krause; Cumberland: Nicole Carminati; Essex: Sharon Ortiz; Gloucester: Brenda Hoffman; Hudson: Lisa Dunn; Hunterdon: Margaret Esposito; Mercer: John Forte; Middlesex: Matthew Hrevnak; Monmouth: Tiffani Monroe; NJREA: Judith Ruff; Ocean: Cheryl Berman; Passaic: Ryan Cohen; Somerset: Genifer Leimbacher; Union: Judy Callahan

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: Sharon Ortiz, Essex

Staff contact: Aileen O'Driscoll

Associate Staff Contact: Meghan Westbrook

Burlington: Tomika Lamb; Camden: John Senft, Higher Ed: Peter Helff; Mercer: Twanda Taylor; Middlesex: Jarrett Lampkin; Non-Classroom Teacher: Angela DeLuccia, Sussex; Ocean: Ron Donnerstag; Union: Lakhia Blocker-Active Support (ESP).

HIGHER EDUCATION

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: Toby DeMarco; Gloucester: Anna Roth; Hudson: Michael Ferlise; Mercer: Edward Carmien; Monmouth: Brent Costleigh, AnnMarie Johnson; Morris: Stephen Kaifa; NJREA: Paul Belmonte, Thomas Harrington; Ocean: Jayanti Tamm, Daniel Ward; 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: Fawnya Gibson, Somerset

Staff contact: DaQuan Bashir, Ed.D.

Associate Staff Contact: Colleen Stevens Lopez

Atlantic: Karol Ball; Bergen: Eric Gugick; Burlington: April Newman; Camden: Ebony Freeman; Cumberland: Rosa Colon; Essex: Theresa Maughan; Gloucester: Qiana Stanard; Hudson: Rachel Blue; Mercer: Lanise Hill; Monmouth: Bridget James; Morris: Nanette Fandino Diaz; NJAEA: Augustus Macholl; NJREA: Betty Meeks-Manning; Ocean: Dorothea Douglas; Passaic: Robert Sarti; Salem: Nicole Cerqueira; Somerset: Anissa Bousellam; Sussex: Angela Deluccia; 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: Brenda Julian

Atlantic: Tamar Lasure-Owens; Bergen: Hannah Bouchard; Burlington: Maria Rivera; Camden: Gregory Louie; Cumberland: Reef Bates; Essex: Linda Johnson-Battle; Gloucester: Cathleen Hertens; Hudson: Shawnte Cheatham; Chere Glover; Mercer: Elizabeth Brasor; Monmouth: 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: Jennifer White, Ph.D.

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: Nicole Carminati, Cumberland

Staff contact: Michael Saffran

Associate Staff Contact: Jennifer Roche

Bergen: David Ahn; Burlington: Melissa Foremny; Camden: Kristi Hunter; Cape May: Jay Wynn; Essex: Jessica Alvarez; Gloucester: Collin Aregood; Hudson: Mark Klein; Mercer: Twanda Taylor; Middlesex: Daniel Fields; Monmouth: Thomas Ballard; Morris: Lisa Kennedy; NJREA: Minnie Mozee; Salem: Alberte Olivier; Somerset: Andrew Coslit; Sussex: Stacy Yanko; Union: Kevin Ross; Warren: Jessica Eresman

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: Carol Rocha, Hunterdon

Staff contact: Beth Schroeder-Buonsante

Associate Staff Contact: G. Lorraine Jones

Bergen: Lori Henderson-Manning; Burlington: Michelle Fuller; Camden: Joy Patterson; Cape May: Jennifer Loper; Cumberland: Deanna Nicosia-Jones; Essex: Louann Lobasso; Gloucester: Frank Cabrera; Hudson: Nyree Freeman-Williamson; Monmouth: Niurka Coy-Bush; NJREA: Jeanne Kiefner; Ocean: Daniel Staples; Somerset: Renee Heller; Sussex: Kailee Gori; Union: Stacy Dauphin

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: Melissa Foremny; Camden: Joy Patterson; Cape May: Stephanie Greenberg; Cumberland:

(vacancy); Essex: Donna Sabol; Gloucester: Eileen Healey; Hudson: Felicia Glover; Hunterdon: Erika Krimm; Mercer: Kelly Susinski; Middlesex: Lois Yukna; Monmouth: Alissa Berse; Morris: Aatifa Hammond; NJAEA: Amanda Kunkel; NJREA: Frances Davis; Ocean: Nancy Jubert; Passaic: Karen Cawthern; Salem: Melissa Lane; Somerset: Laurel Suk; Sussex: Michael Spiridakis; Union: Peter Leone; 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: Brittany Lamb, Camden

Staff contact: Eric Jones

Associate Staff Contact: Linda Calehuff

Atlantic: Tomeka Sanderlin; Bergen: Michelle Hammond-Dudley; Burlington: Saidah Hart; Camden: Tyeisha Jefferies; Cape May: vacant; Cumberland: Nicole Kinsey; Essex: Lisa Nelson; Gloucester: Shereen Ducasse; Hudson: Shrona Wise-Schimpf; Hunterdon: vacant; Mercer: Aaryenne White; Middlesex: vacant; Monmouth: Mary Scott; Morris: Vilmery Hernandez; NJAEA: vacant; NJREA: Vires Simmons; Ocean: Maria DeVenecia-McFarland; Passaic: Samantha Darden; Salem: Alberte Olivier; Somerset: Aida-Janet Wahba; Sussex: vacant; Union: Michael Boyd

NEA ACTIVITIES

The NEA Activities Committee: 1. promotes attendance and other activities of local and state association delegates to the NEA-R.A.; 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 Stevens Lopez

Atlantic: Karol Ball; Bergen: Mariann Kronyak; Camden: Sharita Stinson; Cape May: Tammi Lee; Cumberland: Taja Morton; Essex: Kiara Gary; Gloucester: Shereen Ducasse; Hudson: Andrew Bove; Hunterdon: Katherine Beggiato; Mercer: Gerald Pinner; Monmouth: Yanci Merkel; 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 Stevens Lopez
NEA Directors: Brenda Brathwaite, Theresa Fuller, Laurie Gibson-Parker, Lauren Greenfield, Christine Hewitt, Barbara Rheault, Mark Richards, Stacy Yanko; NEA Director At-Large: Charles Wilson III, Temika Langston-Myers; NEA Resolutions Committee: April Brown, James Frazier Jr., Henry Goodhue III, Theodore Graham, Patricia Guerra-Frazier, Jaclyn Headlam, Chrissy Kosar, Jeremias Salinas, Christal White; NEA Resolutions Committee Alternate: Ebony Freeman, Jeanne Long, Vonnetdra May, Sharon Ortiz, Anna Pinchom, Ashanti Rankin, Maryam Sarham, Tonya Scott-Cole, Samantha Vreeland, Michelle Williams-Wong, Shrona Wise-Schimpf

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: NJEA 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 committees, the county association presidents, the president of NJREA, the president of NJAEA, three (3) 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: Howard Lipoff, Bergen

Staff Contact: Sarah Favinger

Associate Staff Contact: Roxie Muhsin

Atlantic: Keisha Fuqua; Camden: Breanna Ratkevich; Cumberland: Shamia Brandon; Essex: Rocio Lopez; Gloucester: Judith Ideo; Hudson: David Streater; Hunterdon: Molly Esposito; Mercer: Daniel Siegel; Monmouth: Casey Barilka; NJREA: Irene Savicky;

Passaic: Ryan Cohen; Somerset: Theresa Fuller; Union: Tanya Martin-Cooper

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: Keisha Fuqua; Camden: Breanna Ratkevich; Cumberland: Sharnia Brandon; Essex: Rocio Lopez; Gloucester: Judith Ideo; Hudson: David Streater; Hunterdon: Molly Esposito; Mercer: Daniel Siegel; Monmouth: Casey Barilka; 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; Burlington: Lisa Chiavuzzo; Camden: Jordyn Sullender; Cape May: June Camizzi; Essex: Toi Hinton; Gloucester: Lisa Dolby; Hudson: Linda Miller; Hunterdon: Donna Pontoriero; Mercer: Kathryn Graf; Middlesex: Joseph Landolfi; Monmouth: Laura Dipietro, Kelly Fisher; Morris: Angela Cordova; NJAEA: Melizza Delgado; NJREA: James Marion, Diane Stelacio; Ocean: Elisa Waller; Passaic: Shaye Brown-Crandol; Region 29-Higher Education: Bridget Turner; Salem: Sophia Hovermann; Somerset: Marisol Espinoza; Sussex: Shannon Hobby-Psenky; Union: Tonya Scott-Cole

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 responsibility 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

Bergen: Kathleen Nathan; Camden: Colleen Atchison; Cumberland: Rachel Reinhart; Essex: Michael Tedesco; Gloucester: Vito Mazzeo; Hudson: Jose Garcia; Mercer: Michelle Marrazzo; Monmouth: James St. Angelo; NJREA: Amal Hussein; Passaic: Lauren Chavis-Ferrer; Somerset: David Yastremski; 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: John Staab

Associate Staff Contact: Davella Ward

Atlantic: Malissa Ridley; Bergen: Karoline Bethea-Jones, Ph.D.; Burlington: Kimberly Niehaus; Camden: Von-Netdra May; Cape May: Cynthia Rosenberg; Cumberland: Christopher Mohan; Essex: Amanda Eineker; Gloucester: Denise Dawson; Hudson: Edwinta Rhue; Hunterdon: Devon Emerick; Middlesex: Noelle Ebler; Monmouth: Patricia Dasaro; Morris: Ann Marie Finnen; NJREA: Susan Vigilante; Ocean: vacancy; 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: April Stevenson-Kidner, Cumberland

Staff Contact: Dan Goldman

Atlantic: Keesha Fuqua; Bergen: Michael Warren; Camden: Dana Pilla-Grippi; Gloucester: Brenda Hoffman; Hudson: Minnie Williams; Hunterdon: Erika Krimm; Mercer: Pasqualin Adonizio; Monmouth: Allison Capone; Morris: Laura Rivera; NJREA: Michelle Fox; Passaic: Theodore Graham; 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: Leigh Davidson

Associate Staff Contact: LaQuia Norment and Michelle Randazzo

Bergen: Debra Calle; Burlington: Tiffany Harris-Greene; Camden: Sofia Capinha; Cumberland: April Stevenson-Kinder; Essex: Sidney Flournoy; Gloucester: Heather Whitcraft; Higher Ed: Christopher Carroll; Hudson: Edwinta Rhue; Hunterdon: Katherine Beggiato; Mercer: Holly Gurgurich; Middlesex: Susan Waldron; Monmouth: Allison Connolly; NJREA: Karen Hughes; Ocean: Jennifer Ansbach; Passaic: Erin Kelly; Salem: Nicole Cerqueira; Somerset: Max Rodriguez; Sussex: Karen Cubberly; Union: Terron Singletary

STAFF PENSION FUND TRUSTEE

Chair: NJEA President Steve Beatty

Staff Contact: Kristen Sherman

Associate Staff Contact: Monica Winch

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

Bergen: David Ahn; Burlington: Christopher Bowman; Camden: Patricia Martel; Cumberland: Jonathan Gonzalez; Gloucester: Salvatore Randazzo; Hudson: Daniel Abbadessa; Mercer: Olive Giles; Monmouth: Deana Baumert; Morris: Raymond Vikete; NJREA: Lori Lalama; Ocean: Melissa Krupp; Passaic: William Krakower; Sussex: Christopher Cook; Warren: Jasmine Slowik

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: Deanna Nicosia-Jones, Cumberland

Staff Contact: Patrick Manahan

Associate Staff Contact: Beth Georgette

Atlantic: Barbara Rheault; Bergen: Laurie Murrell; Burlington: Stacey Williams; Camden: Jeannie Long; Cape May: Patrick Holden; Essex: Michael Byock; Gloucester: Anthony Cappello; Hudson: Stefanie Woods; Hunterdon: Carol Rocha; Mercer: Talitheia Duncan; Middlesex: Carolyn Muglia; Monmouth: Robin Dreuer; Morris: Brian Adams; NJREA: Frank Harsanyi; Ocean: James Osborn; Passaic: Frank Koterba; Somerset: Michael Razzoli; Union: Alissa Valiante; Warren: Kelly Kleiber

URBAN EDUCATION

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

Lateefah Scott; Bergen: Alison Morgan-Black; Burlington: David Parker; Cumberland: Sherman Denby; Essex: Christal White; Gloucester: Melba Moore-Suggs; Hudson: Samantha Pelletreau; Mercer: Tasha Austin; Middlesex: Paul Bryant; Monmouth: Jennifer Long; Morris: Enrique Manlapid; NJAEA: Amanda Kunkel; NJREA: Geraldine Lane; Passaic: Nicole Fuller; Somerset: Gayle Nelson; Union: Liane Ingalls; Warren: Rodeney Exavierl

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: Julie Klikus, Union

Staff Contact: Ryan McCarty

Associate Staff Contact: Beth Georgette

Bergen: Kevin Rager; Burlington: Keturah Harris; Cumberland: Timothy Campbell; Essex: Joseph Dedalonis; Gloucester: Zachery Bates; Hudson: Daniel Granda; Mercer: Megan Ferdetta; Middlesex: Frank Paprota; Monmouth: Erin Wheeler; Morris: Colleen Pascale; Passaic: Larry Hurtado; Somerset: Sheila Sullivan; Sussex: Deborah Wakefoose; 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: Marybeth Beichert

Associate Staff Contact: Lisa Logan-Leach

Atlantic: Shari Masker; Bergen: Dr. Lauren Zucker; Burlington: Sabrina Austin; Camden: Dr. Tara Mozee; Cumberland: Carmen Porter; Essex: Tisa Singleton; Gloucester: Joyce Farr; Hudson: La-Shay Wilson; Mercer: Dana Lakins; Middlesex: Gabrielle Cavagnaro; Monmouth: Sarah Reichenbecher; Morris: Kathleen Harrington; NJAEA: Kylie Shenton; NJREA: Dr. Joan Jensen; Ocean: Susan Morgan;

Passaic: Kerrian Palmieri; Salem: Dawn Patrick; Somerset: Aida-Janet Wahba; Union: Lillian Gail Alston; Warren: Amanda Best; Sussex: Angela Deluccia

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

Atlantic: John-Fred Crane; Bergen: Susan Dziob; Burlington: Melissa Declementi; Camden: Lisa Campisi; Cumberland: Juanita Douglas; Essex: Evan McLaughlin; Hudson: Beverley Senior; Mercer: Lynda Walsh; Monmouth: Felicia Hardman; Morris: Guada Jacob; NJREA: Frank Foulkes; Somerset: Cheryl Mitchell; Sussex: Gerald Francera; 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: Heather Flaim; Bergen: Karen Santos; Burlington: Tomika Lamb; Camden: Madeleine Leach; Cape May: Heather Sekela; Cumberland: Christopher Mohan; Gloucester: Cathleen Hertens; Hudson: Samantha Vreeland; Mercer: Michael Acchione; Middlesex: Andrew Lewis; Monmouth: MaryMargaret Kurta; Morris: Thomas Salerno; Ocean: Brenda Douglas; Passaic: Trent Johnson; Somerset: Genifer Leimbacher; Sussex: Gerald Fancera

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: Cheryll Willis, Middlesex

Staff Contact: Amanda Adams

Associate Staff Contact: Kimeisha Boyd

Atlantic: Lateefah Scott; Bergen: Martha Martinez; Burlington: Saidah Hart; Camden: John Wojcik Jr; Cape May: Tiffany Lively; Cumberland: Jenny Sierra Turner; Essex: Leah White; Gloucester: Sondra Weiss; Hudson: Ellen Glover; Mercer: Rhonda Williams; Middlesex: Kim Scott; Monmouth: Mary

Scott; Morris: Lee Brensinger; 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 policymaking NJEA Delegate Assembly.

ATLANTIC COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Barbara Rheault, President

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

BERGEN COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Sue McBride, President

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

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

CAMDEN COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

April N. Brown, President

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

CAPE MAY COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Stacey Salerno, President

502 S. Railroad Ave., Rio Grande, NJ 08242-1826, (609) 675-8796

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Nicole Carminati, President

Dandelion Plaza, 1672 N. Delsea Drive, Suite A-2, Vineland, NJ 08360-2548, (856) 794-1221

ESSEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Christine Candarella, President

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

GLOUCESTER COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Steve Whitehead, President

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

HUDSON COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Marquisha Reynolds, President

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

HUNTERDON COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Susan R. Vala, President

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

MERCER COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Daniel Siegel, President

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

MIDDLESEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Lois Yukna, President

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

MONMOUTH COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Denise J. W. King, President

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

MORRIS COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Kerri Lee Farrell, President

477 State Route Ten East, Suite 12, Randolph, NJ 07869 (973) 366-0202

OCEAN COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Susan R. Morgan, President

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

PASSAIC COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Rob Sarti, President

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

SALEM COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Jennifer Lehr, President

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

SOMERSET COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Daniel R. Epstein, President

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

SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Angela Deluccia, President

P.O. Box 841, Sparta, NJ 07871 (973)-306-4634

UNION COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

James Frazier Jr., President

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

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: Steve Beatty, President; Petal Robertson, Vice President; Tina Dare, Secretary-Treasurer; Nancy Bachrach, 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 Assistant

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; 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; Marpessa R. Bell, Tyeisha L. Jefferies, 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; Brenda Pabon-Guadarrama, Michael Caracci, Associate Directors; Deschela Davis, Shirley Jones, Chief-Business Services – Accounting; Cecilia Tromp, Administrative Assistant; Bruce Appel, Omar Gibbs-Colbert, 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, Sam Pinizzotto, Ryan Stouffer, Associate Directors – Software App Development; Donald Miller, Associate Director – Senior Network Architect; Brian Rock, Associate Director- Senior Business Intelligence Analyst; Richard Roche, Jorge Salgado, Associate Directors – Senior Systems Administrators; Bob Howe, Associate Director- Senior IT Support Specialist; Donald Miller III, Michael Oldani, Computer Technicians

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 Clerk

Membership: Jaime Valente, Manager; Eda Ferrante, Associate Director; Murjani Howard, Chief Membership Specialist; Lesley 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: Kristen Sherman, Manager; Andrea Meshofski, Monica Winch, 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 Priderelated partnerships and projects.

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

Graphic Design: Gregg Poserina, Associate Director; Alyssa Bruno, Lead Design Assistant; Jennifer Larson, Technical Design Assistant; Nora J. Lenahan, Typesetter

NJEA Review: Kathy Coulibaly, Associate Director; Sara Ream, Secretary

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

Digital/Visual Communications: Diane Barry, Associate Director

Video Production: Danielle Earle, 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. /political action training for NJEA members.

Member and Political Organizing: Jasaan Boone, Director; Eloy Delgado, Anna Hanzas, Adam Sheridan, Efrain Monterroso - Associate Directors; Verlencia Waring, Administrative Assistant; Christina Alexander, Secretary

Office of Politics and Policy: Deborah Cornavaca, Director; Michael Flynn, Michael Giglio, Francine Pfeffer, Aaron McClendon, Steve Priolo, Associate Directors; Mary Kemery, Administrative Assistant; Christie Procell, Secretary; Marianne Frisina, Secretary

Government Relations Consultants: James Frazier, Erin Wheeler

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, Vicki Serreino, Elisabeth Yucis, Associate Directors; Felicia Davis, Krista Orellana, Administrative Assistants; Tamanyka Booker, Secretary

PD Consultants: Mariah Besas, Brittany Bloss, Katie Burke, Shan Byrd, Monica Generoso, Brian Hoesly, Greg Jablonski, Brian Janik, Pamela Koharchik, Danielle Kovach, Rodney Lane, Tamar LaSure-Owens, Brenda Martin-Lee, Deanne Martini, Michael Mason, Theresa Maughan, Jennifer Passuth, Jason Pukel, Hillary Raszka, Dr. Tiffanie ThrBak, Cheryl Willis

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

ACCESS Consultants: Katherine Clark, Dena Grushkin, Carrie Ann Floyd, Louis Guglielmo, Denise Malone, Deanne Martini, Carolyn Schultz, Danele Still, Dorjima Tchourumoff, Linda Thomas

NJEA Consortium: Kim Pinckney, Ph.D., Associate Director; Brenda Julian, 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, Hillary Raszka, 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: Dan Goldman, 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, Timothy Quinn,
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 Hindman, Fatimah Hayes,
Stephen Redfearn, Jessica Vasquez-Denney
Office Staff: Donna Pacetta, Administrative
Assistant; Elizabeth Parker, Secretary
Consultants: Sandra Beals, Alison Braun, Anthony
Cappello, Laila Gansert, Stephen Garavento,
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;
Marliese Filbert, Kristen Hunt Secretaries
Consultants: Deborah Bruhn, Joseph Coleman,
Catherine MacManiman, Judith Meyer, Janelle
Mungro, Strothers, Lisa Tripani, Kelly Wilcox,
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
Office Staff: Lily Tremari, Administrative Assistant;
Robin DeNoia, Secretary
Consultants: Nicole Del Popolo, Michael Fletcher,
Suzanne Heagen, Kimberlee Shaw, Daniel Staples

REGION 8 Mercer County

172 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608-1104
(609) 896-3422
UniServ Reps: Alexander DeVicaris, Jennifer
DeVicaris, Susan Nardi
Office Staff: Gale Quinn, Administrative Assistant;
Dawn Vitella, Secretary
Consultants: Michele D'Angelo, Talithea 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, Lorraine
Tesauro, 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 Klein, Maurice Koffman
Office Staff: Karen "Skip" Perry, Administrative
Assistant; Marissa Mayor, Office Assistant
Consultants: Michelle Altieri, Edward Carmien,
Nicholas DiCicco, Kerry Frabizio, Tiffany Harris-
Greene, Oron Nahom

UNISERV NORTHWEST (REGIONS 13, 17, 27)

100 Enterprise Drive, Suite 100, Rockaway,
NJ 07866; (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: Eugene Behme III, Christopher
Cannella, Nicole Denton, Lyn Lowndes, Louis
Migliacci, Patricia Resslerand, Nancy Richeda, Susan
Sawey

REGION 17 Morris and Sussex counties

100 Enterprise Drive, Suite 100, Rockaway, NJ
07866; (973) 515-0101
UniServ Reps: LeShaun Arrington, Antoinette
Blaustein, Hendrik John Klein, Vickie Walsh,
Deirdre Falk
Office Staff: Chanae Phifer, Administrative
Assistant; Anne Chirico, Secretary
Consultants: Eugene Behme III, Christopher
Cannella, Nicole Denton, 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; Jesenia Vasquez, Secretary

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

**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, Joe Toma, Gene Woods

REGION 19

Hudson County

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; Vacancy, 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

Office Staff: Veronica Pereira, Administrative Assistant

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, Patricia Kebrdle, Chantal Rivers-Jasey, Adrian Rodriguez

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

Consultants: Rebecca Bell, Cathy Kondreck, 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, James McGuire, Joe Tondi

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

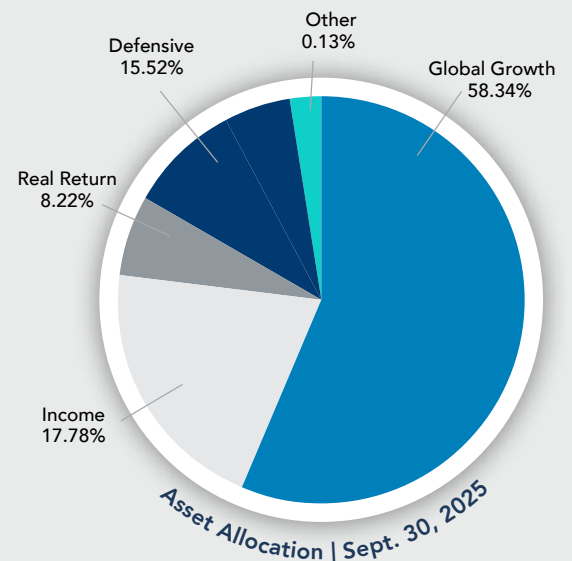
Consultants: Michael DeOrio, Kelly Epstein, Laura Grasso, Marianne Kronyak, Dayna Orlak, Christina Ventre, Michael Warren

PENSION UPDATE

TOTAL PENSION FUND: \$79.00 BILLION

The totals below reflect market values as of Sept. 30, 2025, and for comparison, May 31, 2025. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards.

	Sept 30, 2025		May 31, 2025	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$46.09	58.34%	\$41.41	56.87%
Income	\$14.05	17.78%	\$13.34	18.32%
Real Return	\$6.50	8.22%	\$6.27	8.61%
Defensive	\$12.26	15.52%	\$11.73	16.10%
Other	\$0.100	0.13%	\$0.075	0.10%
Total	\$79.00	100%	\$72.82	100%



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

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INFORMATION SESSION

Whether you're early in your teaching career or looking to move into new roles, **Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE)** offers programs that help you grow with purpose.

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- Flexible program with evening in-person classes
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Behind the screens: How esports production is creating tomorrow's careers

By David Bruno

When people think of esports, they often picture packed arenas, roaring crowds and players holding controllers in the heat of competition. However, behind every high-energy match is a team of skilled professionals managing cameras, editing replays, mixing sound, producing graphics and keeping broadcasts running smoothly. This is where the real magic and the real career potential lives.

If you are skeptical about gaming as a career path, you are not alone. But consider this: esports broadcasts use the same production techniques as Monday Night Football, CNN and Netflix documentaries. The skills are identical. The difference? Students are excited to learn them.

A booming industry

The esports industry is projected to surpass \$1.8 billion in revenue by 2025, with millions of viewers tuning in to watch competitions streamed on platforms like Twitch, YouTube and ESPN. But for every professional player earning a salary, there are dozens of editors, graphic designers, technical directors and broadcast engineers making the show possible. These roles offer stable, well-paying careers in an industry that shows no signs of slowing down.

Camden County College launched its esports program in 2021, becoming one of the first community colleges to offer an associate of applied science degree in Esports Production. Brookdale Community College soon aligned its esports programming, supported by statewide partnerships. The NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative, through the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, has supported both colleges to collaborate with more than 20 K-12 districts to run workshops and create direct pipelines into college esports programs. Industry partners like Horizon AVL Esports Integration and Garden State Esports provide real-world production environments. Transfer agreements with Stockton and Rowan University are expanding academic pathways. Together, these initiatives show how esports has grown beyond competition into a career-connected academic field.

The best part? The skills are transferable. Students learning to produce esports content are mastering Adobe Creative Cloud, DaVinci Resolve and Unreal Engine, and these programs are not gaming-specific. They are the exact software used by film studios, advertising agencies, news networks and corporate marketing teams.

David Bruno is an associate dean of Academic and Workforce Partnerships at Camden County College. David can be reached at dbruno@camdencc.edu.



The NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative, through the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, is supporting county college esports programs.

An engagement game-changer

Here is what educators are discovering: esports production teaches technical skills, but it also transforms student engagement. Attendance improves when students work on real live productions with real deadlines and real audiences. They show up because their team is counting on them, and they stay focused because the broadcast goes live whether they are ready or not.

Colleges are seeing the impact of this work-based learning model. Hundreds of students have produced full-scale esports broadcasts through the Garden State Esports Finals and Collegiate Conference, using professional production tools, while nearly 200 high school students participated in hands-on workshops this year. Educators note that esports production has become an unexpected gateway to career readiness, building skills in communication, leadership, project management and technical troubleshooting.

Additionally, esports programming is proving to be a powerful enrollment and retention strategy. Students show up for productions with a level of ownership and engagement rarely seen in traditional coursework, and they stay because their work matters to their teammates, college community and the audience.

The bottom line

Esports production is the perfect blend of creativity, collaboration and technology. Students are learning the same skills used in film, television and digital marketing. These are skills that translate directly into today's high-demand careers. The future of work is digital, creative and collaborative. Esports production teaches all three, wrapped in something students actually care about. Better engagement. Better attendance. Better outcomes. That is not a compromise. That is smart teaching.

IT'S ABOUT PREVENTION AND SOLIDARITY

By Dorothy Wigmore



Madeleine Leach, Camden County's representative to the NJEA Worksite Safety and Health Committee, speaks with Medford Education Association member Mary Mansfield at the 2025 NJEA Convention.

"NJEA members have a legal right to safe and healthful working conditions. Your employer, the board of education, is responsible for ensuring that school employees and students are not exposed to hazardous conditions."

That's the introduction to NJEA's health and safety web page.

Behind the scenes, the statewide union Worksite Safety and Health Committee focuses on the topic, based on themes of solidarity and prevention.

"It's a structured way to collaborate," says the committee chair, Keith Hinton. "It helps ensure workplaces meet state and federal safety standards, identifies and addresses hazards before they become serious issues, and promotes a climate of prevention." Health and safety in schools is an important issue for members because it directly affects their well-being, their ability to do their jobs effectively and the overall learning environment for students."

A long-time educator in East Orange, and president of

the East Orange Education Association, two health and safety issues are close to Hinton's heart: indoor air quality and job-related violence.

He's not alone. Violence also is a hot topic for Tomika Lamb, a Willingboro fourth grade math and science teacher, and local association treasurer. She's represented Burlington County on the state committee for six years.

The former social worker wanted to give back after NJEA helped her around a possible health hazard.

"I figured I can help other people that are going through different issues with health and safety within the school," she says. "There's been an uptick in violence among the students towards the staff. We want to make sure that

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.



Resources

NJEA Worksite Safety and Health Committee

See Page 38 in this edition of the *Review*.



NJEA

Health and safety manual



NJEA Review

"Health and safety committees Knowledge + Action = Change"



NJEA Review

"Where to begin? Resources for tackling health and safety hazards"

we advocate for them. It's not just mold or lead or air quality, but it's also making sure that the members are safe, as well as the students."

Without a district health and safety committee, NJEA members have no easy way to prevent or deal with health and safety hazards.

Too many members don't know they have a right to health and safety and lack a local committee, says Heather Sekela, Cape May County's newest representative.

"The biggest thing we're dealing with right now is that districts around the state don't have a health and safety committee to begin the process of handling problems," she says. "Our job is to get the word out that every school district should have a health and safety committee to handle things locally first. If members want to start a committee, they can always call on the state committee, and we'll give them the guidance and support.

"You don't deserve, and should not have, to work in a situation where your roof is leaking, you're under construction, etc.," Sekel explains. "I think it's important for local committees to help people realize they deserve better."

Some people just put trash cans under a leak, and work around them, she adds, "because they don't want to cause waves, and they don't think of it as 'we deserve a healthy, safe environment'. I like the fact a health and safety committee can stand up for them, giving people a voice for their own safety and health."

If local committees can't get things fixed, they can go through their UniServ representative to the NJEA staff representative for health and safety, Mike Rollins, and the state committee.

How does the state committee work?

The committee meets at least four times a year to discuss school hazards in the counties each member represents, sharing experiences about dealing with them and lessons learned. They keep tabs on relevant pending state legislation, providing recommendations to organizational leadership concerning the association's position.

"One job we have is to bring our local problems to the state committee and say, 'This is how we handled this,' 'What should we do next?'" Sekela says. "It's to let the local committees know they have a place to go if they're having trouble."

Lamb agrees. "If they have issues, they can always come to us."

"The state committee is important because we can bounce ideas off each other when we come together as a collective," she says. "We talk about different issues that each county may be having, and we get suggestions on what to do, sometimes ones we might not have thought about, and guidance too, about what are the laws and what we can do to make sure the problem is resolved."

As the newest state committee member, Gerry Fancera, who coordinates maintenance and custodial work at Sussex County Technical High School, is still learning. Co-vice president of his local association, he joined the committee because a teacher he works with suggested he would be a good fit.

"I think you need coordination from a bigger entity [like the state committee]," he says. "If you have mold, or asbestos, or pest issues, there are proper steps you need to take. I have a lot to bring to the party that others aren't educated on."

Current committee goals include:

- Advocating for state bills.
- Addressing the increase, and handling, of aggressive behaviors.
- Keeping members up to date.
- Giving out the first-ever NJEA "Clarence Osbourne Worksite Health and Safety Award"
- Maintaining existing health and safety committees, while encouraging creation of new ones.
- On-going trainings for educational support professionals (ESPs) and certificated staff.

February conference offers health and safety training

The last goal is behind the union's Feb. 6-8 Health and Safety Conference. It's for all NJEA members, Hinton says.

"It offers valuable, up-to-date training ... to equip staff with knowledge, practical strategies and statewide support that strengthens the health and safety of every school," he says. "It's an investment in your workplace, your voice and the well-being of the entire district."



PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Membership matters

This fall, the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association received a grant from the National Education Association – Retired (NEA-R) to conduct “Caffeinated Conversations” – an opportunity to sip, chat and connect with current and retired public school employees. Several county retired education associations (CREA) leaders met in coffee shops with interested future retirees to discuss important issues. Of course, the gubernatorial election, concerns about escalating health care costs and working after retirement were common issues, as well as the benefits of NJREA membership.

Kitty Sausa, NJREA president, has made joining NJREA membership a priority for several reasons:

1. NJREA is the largest and strongest public employee union in the state. There is strength in numbers and an association's importance is measured by the number of members.
2. Members receive NJREA's quarterly newsletter, which always features timely information on our pension, health benefits, as well as government relations, in addition to discounts on travel, insurance, and a variety of products.
3. NJREA members may email or phone NJEA headquarters when they have a concern, especially if they are the survivor after the passing of a spouse or family member.
4. All 21 CREAs hold at least two annual meetings and luncheons during which staff members from NJEA's Pension and Benefits discuss and answer questions. Frequently, representatives from Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Aetna are available, too.
5. If you have any NEA insurance policies, you must be a member of NJREA because it also includes membership in NEA-R, NJEA and the CREA in the county in which you worked prior to retirement.
6. Everyone with 20+ years of service should attend an “XYZs of Retirement” workshop at least three years before retiring and repeat the workshop a year prior to the anticipated retirement date.
7. NJEA local and county associations can gift a one year NJREA membership to their retirees.



NJREA members are front and center at the Dec. 4 lobby day to help deliver Tier 1 for Everyone petitions. NJREA is the “daytime face” of NJEA, serving as a critical educator voice.

8. Finally, and most importantly, remember you retire from your position but not your profession. NJREA members advocate in person, by mail and by phone on issues affecting public school employees. “Tier 1 for Everyone” must become law to dismantle the five-tiered pension system that is causing too many employees to leave the profession.

Truly, NJREA officers and county leaders trust that after reading this “decaffeinated article” on the importance of NJREA membership, you will talk to your district leaders or phone NJEA to get more information on how to join NJREA.

NJREA annual dues Sept. 1-Aug. 31

Professional staff: average \$112.

Support staff: average \$65.

Lifetime membership is also available and may be paid in installments.

Lifetime Professional staff: \$2050.

Lifetime Support staff: \$1800.

Phone NJEA – 609-599-4561 extension 9 with questions.

Around the counties 2025-26

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 4: Winter luncheon meeting at The Millville Motorsports Park in Millville. To attend, contact Pam Garwood at 856-392-6909.

Essex County REA

Feb. 11: Annual winter luncheon meeting will be a Zoom Virtual Meeting. To attend, contact Deborah Thurmond for the Zoom link at 973-715-6591.

Middlesex County REA

March 12: Spring luncheon meeting at The Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. There will be a NJREA Member Benefits Fair with Aetna and Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Reservation deadline is March 2, and the cost is \$46. To attend, contact Susan Jaysnovitch at 732-925-1606.

Morris County REA

March 11: General luncheon meeting at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. There will be a Member's Benefit Fair. Reservation deadline is March 1, and the cost is \$35 for members and \$55 for guests. To attend, contact John Williams at 609-504-9681.

Ocean County REA

March 12: Spring luncheon meeting at The Clarion Hotel in Toms River. Speaker to be announced. Reservation deadline is March 1, and the cost is \$32. To attend, contact Pam Raynor at 862-268-5210.

Passaic County REA

March 25: Luncheon meeting at the Brownstone in Paterson. Reservation deadline is March 20, and the cost is \$35. To attend, contact Kitty Sausa at 201-410-1325.

Union County REA

March 25: Winter luncheon meeting at Casa del Rey in Roselle Park. There will be a presentation from NJEA Government Relations and Member Benefits. Reservation deadline is Feb. 15, and the cost is \$40. To attend, contact Luanne Lohman-DiCicco at 732-882-1688.



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*Average savings based on new auto policyholders countrywide who reported savings to the Travelers Call Center in 2024. Individual savings may vary. Savings are not guaranteed. NEA, NEA Member Benefits and the NEA Member Benefits logo are registered service marks of NEA Member Benefits. NEA has retained Members United Insurance Agency to manage Insurance Programs for its Members. Members United Insurance Agency is not affiliated with Travelers. Coverages, discounts, special program rates or savings, billing options, and other features are subject to availability and individual eligibility. Not all products, features or coverages available in all areas or states. Other terms, conditions or exclusions may apply. Policies of insurance offered by Travelers are underwritten by: The Travelers Indemnity Company or one of its property casualty affiliates, One Tower Square, Hartford, CT 06183. © 2025 The Travelers Indemnity Company. All rights reserved. Travelers and the Travelers Umbrella are registered trademarks of The Travelers Indemnity Company in the U.S. and other countries. PL-19886 Rev. 9-25

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*Rosemarie Blumenstein
current CASA / lifelong advocate*

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Hudson County – hudsoncountycasa.org
Monmouth County – casaofmonmouth.org
Ocean County – casaofoceancounty.org
Passaic and Union Counties – casapassaicunion.org
South Central NJ – casasnj.org
(Burlington, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer and Salem Counties)



CLASS IS IN SESSION WITH ASPIRING EDUCATORS' PODCAST

Montclair Aspiring Education Ambassador Abigail Rodriguez is bringing fresh energy and fearless conversation with the launch of “Class in Session,” a podcast created for educators, future educators and every voice shaping the future of New Jersey’s schools. This project has been over two years in the making, building on the foundation laid by previous leadership and elevating it into an exciting new chapter for our community.

“Class in Session” dives into the conversations that matter most: equity, diversity, inclusion, mental health, women’s rights and the lived experiences of young people entering the education field. Rodriguez uses the platform to amplify the stories of Aspiring Educators across the state, creating space for honest dialogue, reflection and connection.

The podcast is supported by NJEA Communications staff Danielle Earle, who plays a key role in guiding and shaping the podcast.

Prior to joining NJEA, Earle worked at Orange High School, where she helped run a podcast for students. Earle enjoys contributing to “Class in Session” because it mirrors the authentic conversations she once fostered in the classroom. Her hands-on experience supporting student voices continues to influence the direction and heart of the podcast.

Rodriguez’s passion for deep and sometimes uncomfortable conversations shines through each episode. She recently recorded a heartfelt conversation with NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Tina Dare exploring womanhood and the challenges seen and unseen that shape women’s lives. She followed it with a raw and deeply necessary dialogue with Dr. DaQuan Bashir, associate director of Human and Civil Rights, Equity, and Governance at NJEA. Their conversation centered on confronting the realities of diversity, equity and inclusion.

With a background in political science, Rodriguez believes that every perspective deserves to be heard. For her, progress comes not from winning debates but from finding common ground, honoring lived experiences and creating space for truth to be spoken. Working with NJEA staff, Rodriguez works to create a space for positivity and motivation.

“Class in Session” also addresses the struggles many young adults face navigating identity, entering adulthood without a clear path and managing the anxiety and depression that often come with transition. Rodriguez

aims to bring light to these moments, reminding listeners that learning extends far beyond the classroom.

For Rodriguez, authenticity is at the core of the podcast’s mission. Each episode lifts real stories, real perspectives and real purpose.

“Class in Session” will officially launch winter 2026, marking an exciting new chapter for the NJEA community.



**Listen to the
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PodSquad podcast**

Does your school host student teachers, practicum students or other future educators?

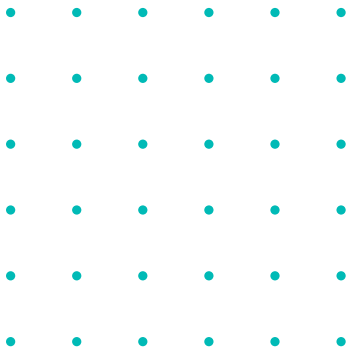
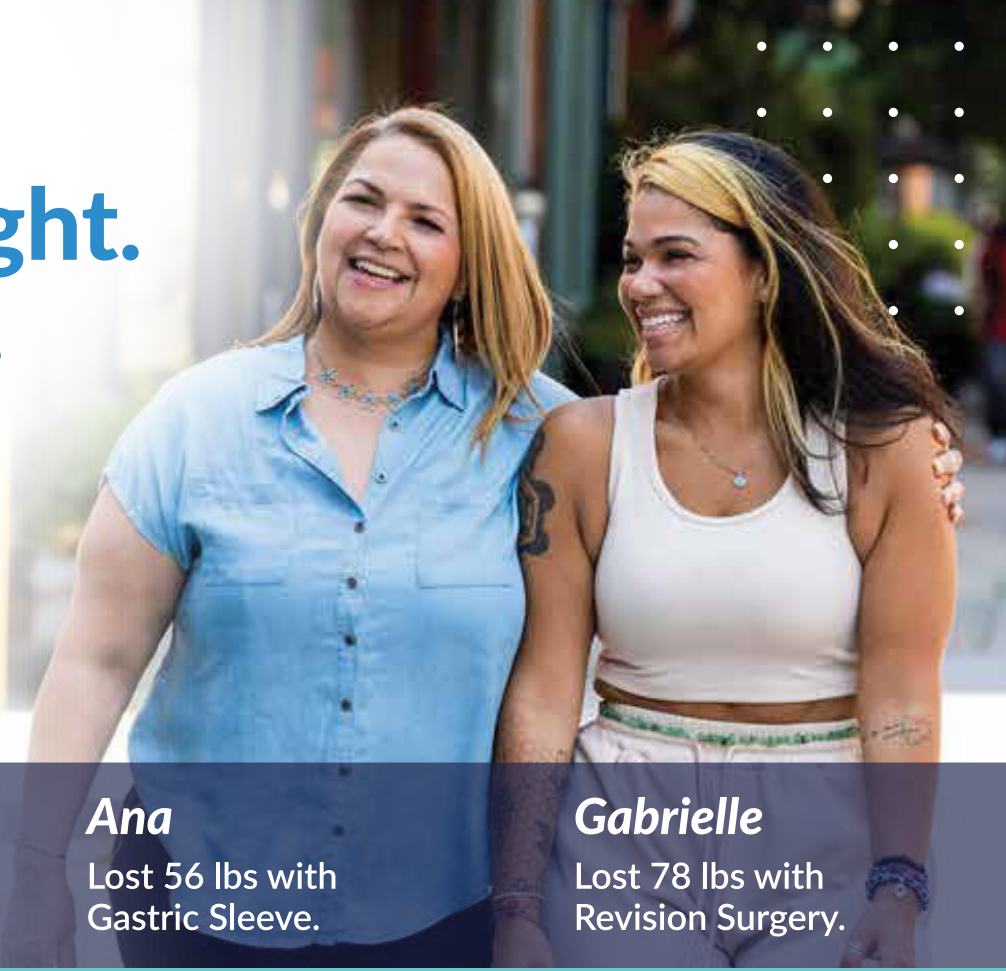
Students preparing to become teachers are the future of our profession and NJEA leadership. That’s why it’s vital to encourage aspiring educators in your school to join the New Jersey Aspiring Educators Association (NJAEA).

Any student attending a college or university in New Jersey who’s interested in education can join NJAEA, especially those involved in clinicals, student teaching, internships or substitute teaching.

As part of NJEA, NJAEA offers valuable professional development opportunities. It hosts a statewide student conference each spring. NJAEA members also attend the NJEA Convention alongside current NJEA members.

To help your favorite aspiring educators sign up for membership, visit njea.org/njaea.

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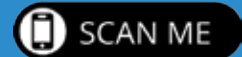
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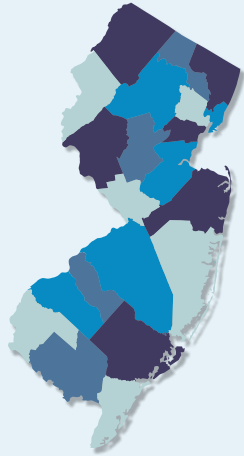


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SHOWCASE

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 & Instructional Issues Division.

2026 NJTESOL/NJBE SPRING CONFERENCE

Unlock Your Potential: BE Multilingual

Intersectionality: Shaping Experiences and Creating Opportunities

The 2026 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.

The In-Person Conference will take place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Brunswick on May 19-21. You can register for one, two or all three days. The conference will feature three keynote speakers: Dr. Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan, Dr. Sharroky Hollie, and Dr. Margarita Machado-Casas.

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.

The Video Library Conference is a select collection of library presentations you will have access to view starting on May 27 using our conference platform. There is no set schedule, and you will be able to view the workshops from May 27 to Aug. 20. By using your unique login, your hours will be tracked so that you can earn professional development hours. Please note that the select collection of presentations will not include the keynotes or special invited guest speakers.

Presentation topics will include Advocacy, Social Justice, and Policy; Supporting Newcomers, SLIFEs and Refugees; Family and Community Engagement; Dual Identified/Special Populations; Early Learning and Family Practices; Social Emotional Learning; Content-Integrated Approaches; Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking; Technology; Language Assessment; Program Administration and Evaluation.

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.

MORE TO LEARN

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ARTS EDUCATION WORKOUT

The Culturally Responsive Arts Education (CRAE) Workout is an eight-week curated asynchronous and synchronous experience that focuses on developing the capacity of educators and administrators to think about how culturally relevant and responsive approaches can shift curriculum, instructional content and teaching practices to more effectively represent and validate all students' cultures and lived experiences.

This program begins Jan. 19 and concludes on March 13.

For more information and to register, visit artsednj.org/professional-learning/crae-workout.

FREE WORKSHOPS FROM THE NJ CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

The New Jersey Center for Civic Education offers a series of free, all-day workshops for teachers during the 2025-26 school year.

Workshops will be held at Rutgers University's Piscataway campus from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with continental breakfast and lunch provided. Sessions are supported by state funding and are free to school districts.

The schedule includes:

- Media Literacy (90 minutes, virtual – Jan. 14 at 4:30 p.m.)
- We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution (for middle and high School) – Feb. 10
- Engaging Students in Civics in Middle School – Feb. 24
- Civics for K-5 – March 10
- The Development of Democracy in Ancient Civilizations (middle school) – March 20
- Infusing Civics, Economics and NJ into High School U.S. History – March 26

For more information and to register, visit civiced.rutgers.edu/events.

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Highland Park LMC develops districtwide cellphone policy

By Kimberly Crane

Tackling a ubiquitous issue

Navigating the issues that personal electronic devices (PED), especially cellphones, bring to the classroom is a part of daily life for educators. The Highland Park School District labor-management collaborative (LMC) teams recently developed and implemented a cellphone policy so successful that other districts are now reaching out for advice.

A rationale for change

Highland Park staff and administration both recognized that students were increasingly disengaged and that something needed to change.

"Prior to this school year, we observed increasing student distraction from PEDs, particularly during instructional time," says HPEA President Keith Presty. "Hallways were congested, and student focus in classes felt compromised by the constant pull of external notifications."

Setting the collaborative stage

The PED policy groundwork began this past summer. The district's central leadership team (CLT) is composed of HPEA members, association leadership, administrators and board of education members, including Board President Allison Casal-Dunn.

By early September, a comprehensive policy was completed. It was clear that there would be zero tolerance for cellphone use during instructional time.

"The rules are firm," says Superintendent Kristina Susca. "We outlined the progressive consequence structure, starting with a verbal warning and a parent notification email, escalating to documentation, further parent contact for repeat offenses, etc."

The district also specified when and where phones were permitted—study hall, passing periods, lunch and on the bus.

As with any new policy, the CLT understands that consistency, holding students accountable and supporting staff as they enforce it are key to ensuring effectiveness.

Staff and parent engagement

Highland Park's CLT understood that communication with parents about the new cellphone policy was vital. They maintained constant contact with families, especially during the first week. They scheduled parent meetings

to discuss enforcement and address any concerns. This open dialogue was crucial to building understanding and support within the community.

"We were very intentional about communicating to students and parents in advance of implementation," says board member and past board president, Marilyn Pruce.

The policy extended to all devices—phones, AirPods, smartwatches—and an individual accommodation system for those with legitimate medical needs, as called for in their IEPs and 504 plans, was established to ensure fairness.

Positive outcomes and impact data

The policy is adjusted to accommodate the needs of each school building.

In the first week, the district saw remarkable results. At the middle school, 822 fewer hall passes were recorded—a dramatic decrease in loitering and unnecessary movement. Student focus in classes increased significantly, and outdoor recess participation for middle schoolers jumped from 10% to an impressive 90%.

Students rediscovered social interaction and physical activity. A significant number of students chose not to bring phones to school at all.

Student representatives on the school board expressed gratitude for the positive shift in school climate, and the feedback from most students has been surprisingly positive.

Reflections on success

Highland Park's work on this issue is a testament to what can be achieved when collaborative teams set a clear vision, create time for consistent communication and commit to positive change.

"Our PED policy journey in Highland Park has been transformative," says Presty. "It wasn't just about banning phones; it was about reclaiming our learning environment and rediscovering student engagement."

Kimberly Crane is an NJEA Communications Consultant and former president of the Highland Park Education Association. She can be reached at kcrane@njea.org.

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



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Life can throw all kinds of curve balls, which can sometimes knock our finances off balance despite our best efforts. With your membership in NJEA, you have access to additional resources and experts to help you meet many of life's challenges. Learn more by attending our "Dollars & Sense" webinar on Jan. 21 at 4:30 p.m. This webinar is designed to provide helpful tips and information to assist you in getting on the right financial pathway. Register at njea.org/mbwebinars.



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Get informed about your student loan forgiveness options through monthly webinars designed for NJEA members. Register at njea.org/dndwebinars.



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Attend an NJEA Homebuying Workshop on March 4 and learn what to expect in your journey to homeownership. Use NJEA/NEA Member Benefits to make smart choices and save you money along the way! Register at njea.org/mbwebinars.



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NJEA Delegate Assembly

A note about the minutes

On pages 58-61, you will find the minutes for two meetings of the NJEA Delegate Assembly (D.A.): May 18 and Sept. 7, 2024. You may have noticed recently that some rather dated minutes have been published.

The D.A. formulates NJEA policy. It includes more than 120 representatives proportionally elected from each county and unit (e.g., Higher Education, NJREA, NJAEA, non-classroom teacher). You can find your county or unit's representatives by logging on to njea.org and clicking on "Committees" from the website dashboard.

The NJEA Review is constitutionally required to print D.A. minutes when they become available for publication. Due to a backlog in publication, the D.A. passed a New Business Item (NBI) establishing a timeline for publication of minutes.

Going forward the *NJEA Review* will publish the most recent minutes available, followed by older minutes, until all previous minutes have been published.

May 18, 2024

The NJEA Delegate Assembly met at the Crowne Plaza, Princeton Conference Center, 900 Scudders Mill Rd., Plainsboro Twp., N.J. on May 18, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Sean M. Spiller.

The roll call and the seating of delegates was taken by Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson. There were 114 members present, and a quorum was met. Alternates were seated as follows: Primas for Jenkins (Atlantic); A. Policastro for Murphy, (Bergen); Dedalonis for Giannotti (Essex); Acchione for Balaity (Gloucester); Hopkins for Orama (Mercer); Lewis for DelPopolo (Middlesex); Mangione for Behme (Morris); Jubert for Pizzuto (Ocean); Kebrdle for Wilson (Passaic); and Alston for Klikus (Union).

Absent without alternates were the following: Houk (Atlantic); Mendelson (Bergen); Warren (Bergen); Woods (Hudson); Ebler (Middlesex); Maher (Monmouth); Dawson (Salem); Frain (Somerset); Boyd (Union); Esquivel for Benamy (Union); and Ferlise (Higher Ed).

Brittany Lamb, Camden County, gave the Inspirational Message and along with President Spiller, led the delegation in the Flag Salute.

President's report

Spiller highlighted the following:

- SBOE Updates
- GR Update
- Budget
- Federal Elections

Spiller asked NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty to introduce the 2024-25 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, Joseph Nappi, who teaches Social Studies at Monmouth Regional High School in Toms River, N.J.

Vice president's report

Vice President Steve Beatty highlighted the following:

- Educator Identification, Recruitment, Mentoring and Retention
- State Preservice Leadership Team Updates
- Chair and Committee Updates
- Center for Future Educators (CFE) @ TCNJ
- NJACTE
- Organizing for Education (O4Ed)
- Department of Education and State Board of Education
- Affiliated Special Interest Groups
- New Jersey Department of Education Holocaust Commission Seminar
- NJSTOY

Secretary-treasurer's report

Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson delivered the NJEA fiscal report.

- Robertson highlighted the following:
- Good News
- Budget Season
- Membership Matters
- Pension Organizing
- NJEA Celebration of Women

Executive Director's report

Executive Director Kevin Kelleher highlighted the following:

- PAC Numbers
- Membership
- NJEA Hardship Relief Fund Online Portal
- NEA
- NJEA Staff Recognition – Employee Service Awards
- Affirmative Action Report

Nondelegate speakers

There were no nondelegate speakers.

Reports of committees without recommendations**Technology Committee**

The Technology Committee provided an informational update highlighting ongoing efforts to improve NJEA's digital infrastructure.

Reports of committees with recommendations**Technology Committee**

The Constitution Review Committee report recommended aThe Technology Committee provided an informational update highlighting ongoing efforts to improve NJEA's digital infrastructure.

Affiliation Committee

Gerard Campione, Middlesex County, chair of the Affiliation Committee presented the committee's report recommending affiliation of the local associations listed below.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 1: that the affiliation of the following two associations be approved:

- Upper Deerfield Custodial Association (Cumberland County)
- Morris Hills Regional District Transportation Association (Morris County)

Peter Helff, Higher Education, moved the recommendations. It was duly seconded.

Budget Committee

Petal Robertson, Essex County, secretary-treasurer, presented the report of the Budget Committee with the following recommendations:

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: that the New Jersey Education Association operating budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year in the amount of \$142,588,900 as listed in the 2024-25 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: that the New Jersey Education Association Pride public relations budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year in the amount of \$13,511,100 as listed in the 2024-25 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: that the New Jersey Education Association Capital Fund budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year in the amount of \$5,933,300 as listed in the 2024-25 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.4: that staying with the practice of NJEA, no cost center shall be overspent without a review by the Budget Committee and action by the Delegate Assembly at its regularly scheduled meetings or by the Executive Committee during the months of June, July, and August, as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws.

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.5: that the Secretary/Treasurer notify the Budget Committee of any over-budget lines in the audit as soon as possible, but no later than prior to the presentation

of the audit at the December Budget Committee meeting with explanation of those items over budget.

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.6: that the budget for the Human Rights Celebration and Equity Alliance Conference income in cost center 0340 be increased by \$9,000 to offset the corresponding need for a budget increase of \$15,000 to the Human Rights Celebration and Equity Alliance Conference expense in cost center 0455, as a result of the increased

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.6: that the budget for the Human Rights Celebration and Equity Alliance Conference income in cost center 0340 be increased by \$9,000 to offset the corresponding need for a budget increase of \$15,000 to the Human Rights Celebration and Equity Alliance Conference expense in cost center 0455, as a result of the increased participation and enhanced planning for celebration of the 50th year event. The additional \$6,000 needed to cover expenses will be transferred from cost center 047 Special Activities.

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.7: that the sum of \$425,000 be transferred from Special Activities 0470 into Cost Center 0520 Computer Center to cover additional software licensing costs in relation to the OneNJEA and CVENT platforms.

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.8: that the sum of \$20,000,000 be transferred from Net Assets into Cost Center 0471 Organizational Projects for the current fiscal year 2023-2024, and an additional funding of \$20,000,000 from Net Assets be added to the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget Cost Center 0471 Organizational Projects, to cover independent expenditures related to the election campaign.

Christine Candarella, Essex County moved recommendations 1-5 in block. The motion carried.

Ann Margaret Shannon, Union County moved recommendations 6-8 in block. The motion carried.

Constitution Review Committee

Scott Elliott, Warren County, chair, presented the report and moved the committee's recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION #1: that the NJEA Bylaws Section I(e) be amended by substitution as follows:

"...and provided further that, upon payment in full of the amount to the nearest dollar produced by multiplying the dues for retired members as established above by ~~fifteen (15)~~ **twenty-five (25)** the member shall be a retired member for life, with twenty-eight percent (28%) of this amount rounded to the nearest dollar remitted to the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association in accordance with a unified dues agreement between the NJEA and NJREA."

The motion carried.

Exceptional Children Committee

Tomeka Sanderlin, Camden County, chair, presented the report and moved the committee's recommendation.

The recommendation was as follows:

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: that NJEA create the Marie Blistan Advocacy Award to honor advocates who champion the rights of children and adults with exceptionalities.

Award criteria and the nomination and selection process were outlined in the report of the Exceptional Children Committee.

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee presented a policy recommendation to update NJEA's professional learning standards to align with those of Learning Forward, a national organization focused on educator development.

Debra Coughlin, Passaic County, moved Policy Recommendation No. 1.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: that NJEA believes all professional development experiences for teaching staff should meet a minimum standard of quality as defined by New Jersey's Standards for Professional Learning as currently adapted and adopted by the State Board of Education and outlined below. Where applicable, these standards should also be used to guide professional learning for other school staff.

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and improves results for all students shall be guided by the following: (See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

This policy resolution replaces prior policy adopted on May 19, 2012.

The recommendation was adopted by the Delegate Assembly.

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee report recommendations were:

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: that NJEA change the name of the community outreach program grants that are, provided to locals and counties under the Pride in Public Education program to Public Education Partnership (PEP) grants. This will not change the overall name of Pride in Public Education program.

A. PRIDE FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND GRANT FORMULAS (See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: that the [Pride] PEP funding Allocations & Grant Formulas be amended as follows: (See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

B. PRIDE MEAL REIMBURSEMENT PARAMETERS (See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

After extensive discussion and review, the committee recommends the following:

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.3: that NJEA [Pride] PEP Meal Reimbursement Parameters be amended as follows: That the local association per person dinner reimbursement be [~~\$33~~] **\$40** per person maximum.

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO.4: that NJEA [Pride] PEP Meal Reimbursement Parameters be amended as follows: That for the one event per funding year the county association will be allowed one meal allowance of up to [~~\$55~~] **\$75** per attendee, inclusive of tax and gratuity. The meal expense must fit within the budgeted grant allowance for the fiscal year.

A. [PRIDE] PEP ACTIVITIES & ADMINISTRATION

Organizing Grants

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 5: that the [Pride] PEP Organizing grants be amended as follows to replace the current language: (See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

Sponsorship Grants

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 6: that NJEA [Pride] PEP Organizing grants be amended as follows: That the grant portal "Marketing/Branding" be renamed as "Sponsorship."

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 7: that NJEA [Pride] PEP Organizing grants be amended as follows:

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

Program Logistics

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 8: that NJEA [Pride] PEP grant Logistics be amended to include below as follows:

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

Application deadlines

In reviewing the application policies, the committee recommends the website portal be amended for consistency with the change in the grant name.

After extensive discussion and review, the committee recommends the following:

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 9: that the NJEA [Pride] PEP grant application website portal be amended as follows:

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

C. [PRIDE] PUBLIC EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP (PEP) EXCLUSIONS

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 10: that NJEA [Pride] PEP grant application exclusions be amended as follows:

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

C.[PRIDE] PEP REIMBURSEMENT SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION NO. 11: that NJEA [Pride] PEP grant reimbursement procedures as be amended as follows:

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

E. PANDEMIC EMERGENCY ADJUSTMENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

F. FAST FUNDING ALLOCATION & GRANT FORMULAS

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

G. FAST ADMINISTRATION

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

H.FAST MEAL REIMBURSEMENT PARAMETERS

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

I.FAST REIMBURSEMENT SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

J.FAST EXCLUSIONS

(See Appendix A under these minutes at njea.org/da.)

RULE RECOMMENDATION 12: that NJEA formally adopt the Families and Schools Together Work for Children Program as

identified in items I through N of this report designed to:

- Ensure families feel welcome in schools as partners in their children's education.
- Encourage family involvement in their children's education.
- Enhance overall success by creating an environment that empowers families within our communities

Denise King (Monmouth County) moved the recommendations. The Delegate Assembly adopted the committee's recommendations.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee

The chair of the committee requested that the committee report be pulled from the meeting. The report was tabled for further review and revisions.

New Business

New Business Item #1

James Frazier (Union County), moved that ... that the executive director's annual affirmative action update of full-time and part-time NJEA staff and consultants be expanded to include:

- the breakdown by NJEA division of newly hired staff and consultants;
- the breakdown of newly hired NJEA consultants who are active supportive members;
- the breakdown by gender identity of newly hired NJEA staff and consultants who choose to self-identify.

This information should be included in the executive director's annual affirmative action update for the May 2025 Delegate Assembly meeting.

The motion was seconded and passed.

For the Good of the Order

Diane Vistein (Somerset County), chair of the Member Benefits Committee, encouraged members to support the Hardship Relief Fund.

Ronald Donnerstag (Ocean County) proposed raising the income dues threshold for low-income earners to ease financial burdens. The proposal was referred to the Membership Committee.

Marquisha Reynolds (Hudson County) brought a donation for the Hardship Relief Fund.

Jeremiah Salinas (Middlesex County) invited everyone to the RISE Conference on Wed., July 24, 2025, and to invite their members.

Steve Koumoulis (Monmouth County) commended the SOGI Committee on a wonderful conference last weekend.

Lori Lalama (Passaic County) reflected on terming out of the Delegate Assembly, praised the NJEA Apprentice Program, and highlighted successful labor-management collaboration in Clifton. She announced a \$2,000 donation from the Clifton Education Association to the Hardship Relief Fund.

James Frazier (Union County) sought to rally support for NJEA's potential gubernatorial candidate, encouraging members to raise their signs.

Kerri Lee Farrell (Morris County) shared that Morris County has added a budget line for the Hardship Relief Fund and encouraged other locals to do the same to ensure steady support for members in need.

Tiffanie ThrBak (Cumberland County) shared that the Fourth Annual PRIDE Freedom Ride and Walk will be held on June 14 to celebrate Juneteenth. She also honored her friend Melba Moore-Suggs with a heartfelt 50th birthday tribute.

Joan Wright, NJREA President, thanked the Delegate Assembly for passing the budget that ensures NJREA's financial stability and reaffirmed NJREA's commitment to supporting active members in the fight for pension and benefits justice.

Petal Robertson, NJEA Secretary Treasurer celebrated Atlantic County's Melissa Tomlinson for being featured in the book Fair Shake: Women and the Fight to Build a Just Economy.

Adjournment

Peter Helff, Higer Ed, moved to adjourn and the motion was duly seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Sept. 7, 2024

The NJEA Delegate Assembly met at the Doubletree, Somerset, 200 Atrium Drive, Somerset, N.J. on Sept. 7, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Sean M. Spiller.

The roll call and the seating of delegates was taken by Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson. There were 121 members present and a quorum was met. Alternates were seated as follows: Fuller for Newman (Burlington); Stinson for Mungro (Camden); Jeffries for Robinson-Taylor (Camden); Aregood for Balaity (Gloucester); Young for Acosta (Hudson); Laguna-Moura for DelPopolo (Middlesex); Barilka for Montanti (Monmouth); and Tighe for Castiglione, (Salem).

Absent without alternates were the following: Hopkins (Mercer) and Nicolescu for NJEA Preservice.

Rocio Lopez, Essex County, gave the Inspirational Message and along with President Spiller, led the delegation in the Flag Salute.

President's report

Spiller remembered former educator and NJEA staff member, Angelina Carione who passed away on Aug. 21, 2024 and asked for a moment of silence to remember her.

- Spiller highlighted the following:
 - State Board of Education
 - GR update and elections
 - Legislative work

Spiller introduced the 2024-25 New Jersey County Teachers of the Year and asked for a round of applause for them.

Spiller also recognized 2024-25 NJEA ESP of the Year Mark Richards.

Vice president's report

Vice President Steve Beatty highlighted the following:

- NJEA Preservice and educator identification, recruitment, mentoring and retention
- Center for Future Educators
- William Paterson University
- Organizing for Education (O4Ed)
- Higher Education
- Educator Evaluation Task Force
- Department of Education and State Board of Education
- Labor Management Collaborative
- Affiliated Special Interest Groups
- NJ State Teacher of the Year

Secretary-treasurer's report

Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson delivered the NJEA fiscal report.

- Robertson highlighted the following:
- Good news
- Women for the Win
- Harris/Walz Day of Action
- Spiller Meet and Greet
- World Peace Games
- PDII Impact Conference
- New Jersey Chinese Teachers Association
- NJREA

Executive director's report

Executive Director Kevin Kelleher highlighted the following:

- PAC by the numbers
- Elections matter
- Membership
- NJEA Labor Management Collaborative
- Communications
- Member and political organizing
- Professional Development and Instructional Issues
- Human and Civil Rights, Equity and Governance
- Research and Economic Services
- NJEA Hardship Relief Fund Online Portal
- Legal Services
- Research and studies

Nondelegate speakers

Henry Goodhue, Somerset County, the president of the Hillsborough Education Association, and vice president of Somerset County Education Association urged NJEA leaders to provide office space with reliable internet to help preservice educators overcome barriers to taking virtual certification exams.

Lori Lalama emphasized the value of NJEA's Labor Management Collaborative for fostering strong district-union partnerships, and she also warned of ongoing threats to public education, and urged support for pro-education leadership and advocacy.

Reports of committees without recommendations Elections Committee

Joe Toma, Middlesex County, presented the Elections Committee report, which summarized the successful execution of NJEA's 2024 elections, including the certification of results for Executive Committee members, Delegate Assembly representatives, and NEA RA delegates, all conducted in accordance with established procedures and verified by an external vendor. The report was accepted as presented.

Reports of committees with recommendations

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee

Chris Cannella, Essex County, chair of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee presented the committee's report recommending:

RECOMMENDATION 1: that NJEA adopt the following amendments to policy resolutions:

Domestic Partnership, Civil Union, and Marriage

...that NJEA believes such factors as race, sex [gender], sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion [should not] are not to affect the legal rights and obligations of partners in a legally [recognize] recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage, including with respect to such matters as medical decisions, taxes, inheritance, adoption and immigration, and member benefits.

Policy adopted May 2015

Program and Practices Principles

...that NJEA believes in the equality of all individuals. It opposes and seeks to eliminate stereotyping based on such factors as race, sex [gender], sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters based on the standards below.

The Association further believes that plans, activities, and programs for education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community should be developed to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings. Such plans, activities, and programs must:

Policy adopted May 2015

a. [~~Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward all individuals and groups in a diverse society, which includes but is not limited to American Indians/ Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender persons, and people with disabilities;~~ **Respect, honor, affirm, and celebrate all LGBTQIA+ people of all race, ethnicities, religions, sexes, genders, ages, abilities, nations of origin, and socio-economic status, etc., and elevate the intersectionality of these identities;**

b. Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping **increase visibility that affirms and celebrates LGBTQIA+ experiences** in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.;

- c. Foster ~~[the dissemination and use of]~~ **and promote** nondiscriminatory and non-stereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities **affirming positive representation of the LGBTQIA+ experience.**
- d. Eliminate institutional discrimination **based on LGBTQIA+ orientations, identities, and expressions:**
- e. Integrate an accurate **and affirming** portrayal of the roles and contributions of ~~[all groups]~~ **the LGBTQIA+ community**, throughout history across curricula, particularly **those LGBTQIA+ groups that have been [underrepresented] marginalized** historically;
- f.
- g. Identify how prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination have ~~[limited]~~ **influenced** the ~~[roles and]~~ contributions of individuals ~~[and groups,]~~ **in the LGBTQIA+ community** and how these ~~[limitations]~~ **influences** have challenged, changed, and continue to challenge and advocate for positive change to build a more inclusive society;
- h. Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another based on race, ~~[gender]~~, sexual orientation, gender ~~[identification]~~ **identity**, gender expression, ~~[disability, ethnicity, or religion]~~ **disability, ethnicity, religion, etc.;**
- i. Encourage, **through advocacy training and union engagement**, all members of the educational community to examine **personal and societal** assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and **LGBTQIA+ antagonisms**, ~~[that]~~ **which** might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees;
- j. Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and **promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools.**
- ~~[j] [and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools;]~~
- ~~[k].~~ **Coordinate** with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups, **including LGBTQIA+ groups;**
- ~~[l]~~ **k. Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all through LGBTQIA+ affirming practices and policies such as gender-neutral bathrooms; personal pronoun affirmation; support and advocate for the collection of demographic information to include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression: etc.**

B. PROPOSED NEW POLICY RESOLUTION ON PROTECTING STUDENTS' SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITIES

In the past year, some districts have targeted the privacy and self-determination rights of LGBTQIA+ students. Actions by boards of education and administrations have included altering or creating policies that treat LGBTQIA+ youth as unequal to their heterosexual and cisgender peers. There have been attempts to create policies that would "out" LGBTQIA+ students, and some districts have removed policies based on New Jersey's Transgender Student Guidance.

NJEA is working in collaboration with LGBTQIA+ advocacy and education partners to pass and enact legislation that would codify the state's transgender student guidelines. The SOGI Committee believes it is necessary to expand the language of the existing SOGI Resolution which includes students, to emphasize the need for greater protections of the rights of students and their sexual orientation and gender identity. The SOGI sub-committee on policy resolution drafted language to amend the existing SOGI resolutions to further affirm NJEA's commitment to protecting the identity of our LGBTQIA+ students. The sub-committee's recommendation was forwarded to the full committee, which voted to present the language below to the Delegate Assembly for approval.

RECOMMENDATION 2: that NJEA believes, **Students' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity** **All public-school districts have a professional and legal obligation that ensures all students, regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, or other protected status, have access to a free and appropriate public education.**

The Association further believes that districts have a legal obligation to protect the sexual orientation and gender identity of its students and that they cannot mandate employees to violate New Jersey's Law Against Discrimination with regard to outing or disclosing a student's identity.

The Association acknowledges that while supportive parental involvement is ideal for students exploring their identity, disclosures may sometimes increase their risk.

April Stevenson-Kinder (Cumberland) moved recommendations 1 and 2 in block. The recommendations were adopted.

For the Good of the Order

Mike Warren, Bergen County, asked about where he could find the campaign video featuring educators, and he was advised that it will be posted on the NJEA website.

Sturac Meyers, Camden County, inquired about the status of election fund transfers, which were approved in March. She was advised that the first half was transferred, and the second half was in process of being transferred.

Chrissy Kosar, Gloucester County, requested donations for period products via Amazon or at convention, highlighting community need. Additionally, she asked about pension tier legislation for members with breaks in service.

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson reminded delegates to sign campaign boards and to share photos.

Adjournment

Peter Helff, Higher Ed, moved to adjourn. The motion was duly seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.



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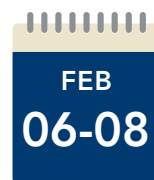
FRIDAY

Executive Committee meeting



SATURDAY

MLK Jr. Human Rights Celebration



FRI TO SUN

ESP and Health & Safety Conference



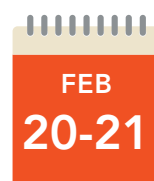
SATURDAY

Delegate Assembly



FRI & SAT

Winter Leadership Conference South



FRI & SAT

Winter Leadership Conference North



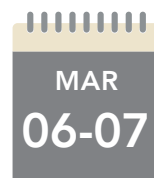
TUESDAY

NJREA founded in 1920



WEDNESDAY

Executive Committee meeting



FRI & SAT

Winter Leadership Conference Central

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Continue the journey at NJEA IMPACT Conference 2026 on Wednesday, July 15, 2026

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY
April 25
2026



JASON REYNOLDS

UNIONS FEED PEOPLE

Ask someone who doesn't work in public schools what a public-sector educators' union fights for, and you will likely hear "salary," "health benefits," or "pensions." These answers aren't wrong, but they're profoundly incomplete. We fight for so much more than that.

The true power of our union lies not only in our ability to negotiate a contract, but in our unwavering commitment to the children in our classrooms and the communities we serve. We are relentless advocates for everything that enables children to learn in schools.

And you cannot educate a hungry child.

For us, and unions in every corner of the labor movement, the fight to feed children and communities isn't some public relations stunt. It's part of who we are and what we believe. This idea represents the very core of our union's spirit.

The New Jersey Department of Health's most recent NJ State Health Assessment Data (NJSHAD), conducted in 2023, reports that roughly 300,000 children in New Jersey live in food-insecure households. That's roughly 23% of all students enrolled in public schools. Worse still, the number of children living with food insecurity isn't declining; it's rising. In 2020, for instance, the number of children living with food insecurity was estimated at around 175,000, or 15% of all students.

Numbers aside, we see it in our classrooms every day. The child who comes to school and asks his friends or school staff for an extra snack. To the untrained eye, a child's behavior may scream he's not paying attention. But an educator sees a cry for help and food. It's hard to learn algebra. It's impossible to learn when you're starving.

It's in our nature to help. And that's what we do. We come together; we act. Through NJEA Public Education Partnership and Families and Schools Together grants, sponsored by our union and utilized by hundreds of educators every year, educators make a difference by meeting with community members, identifying needs, and working to address them.

Walk through the hallway of your school, and you'll see cardboard boxes filled to the brim with canned goods and nonperishable items headed to families in need. Those boxes don't appear there magically. It's educators. It's us. We're organizing families in our communities to come together to help us meet everyone's needs.

In this issue of the *NJEA Review*, "the number," which we highlight each month, was 700. That's not the cost

of groceries, adjusted for inflation. That's the number of pounds of food we, collectively, brought with us to Atlantic City at this year's NJEA Convention. That's how we make a difference. That food will make its way into homes and, when it does, the children who need it will be able to pay attention a little better in school.

When we feed children, we aren't just ensuring they can learn for a day at school. We are giving them the tools to learn, period. With food in their bellies and knowledge in their minds, those hungry children can and do grow to be thriving adults. But it starts when they're young.

As with all our work as union members, ensuring children have what they need to thrive isn't as simple as only donating food. When we fight for broad policy issues impacting public education—like pension justice or health benefits for educators—we contribute to a stronger, more stable middle class that allows all families to support their children in the way that all children deserve. These policies, when enacted, work to stabilize educators' lives and, in doing so, enhance our ability to support our students everywhere and in every way.

The power of our union isn't measured solely by the strength of our contracts, but in the number of children who are fed, focused and free to learn. 🍎





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