



EBEA NEWSLETTER

East Brunswick Education Association

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UNITED IN EXCELLENCE

Winter 2017

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT: DR. DANA ZIMBICKI



THE SEASON FOR REFLECTION

This is the time of year when we all reflect on what we are thankful for in our lives and we look to see what we can improve on in 2017. Certainly we are thankful for our families, friends, good health, financial independence, and the little daily joys. However, have you thought about being thankful for your association and the rights afforded to you by the **unity, advocacy, and empowerment** of our NJEA/MCEA/EBEA leaders and members? Have you ever given any thought to what you can do to improve your position in public education? Too often we go to work each day striving to do our personal best and when it is time to be thankful for a day off, a prep period, new cold weather gear, and 6th period stipend, whom do we thank? Most often we thank our board, principal, department chair, and supervisor. We, as members of a 200,000-member organization, need to realize that what we have has been bargained for by each local bargaining committee with the support and guidance of NJEA and our county associations. What we have...we have fought for, we have traded for other items, we have bargained for!!! We should be giving thanks for our own advocacy. It comes with what we wish to improve.

The purpose of this article is for all members to understand the importance of **organizing, advocating, and being part of a team**. We need to stand strong, arm in arm with each other, in order to move our educational agenda in a positive direction. With internal dissention and strife, we surely will grow weaker. We do not want New Jersey to become a state with state contracts, such as North Carolina. Occasionally we may be asked, "what do I get for my dues dollars?" As association leaders our typical response is to recite a long list of everything members are entitled to as a dues paying members. Perhaps next time we should take a different, more impactful, approach. How about painting a picture of what it would be like to work in a state without union representation? Watch their eyes as you ramble off a list of "what-ifs." Try it.

A colleague and former member of our association moved to North Carolina after teaching for eight years in New Jersey. She was grateful that she found a job in her new state but also in shock when she discovered the extent of the benefits that she no longer was entitled to. She now will work under a state contract. No Education Associations, no representation...EVER!

With eight years teaching experience her starting pay in North Carolina was \$35,000 with a bachelor's degree with a maximum potential salary of \$51,000. While certainly the cost of living is different from New Jersey to North Carolina, it is not that different! The newly hired teacher does not have a teacher desk and she does not know if she will ever receive one. It is not an entitlement! She also has "volunteer activities" she must perform as part of her contract. In fact, she must work the gates at sporting events twice in an athletic season, that is six times per year, for FREE! No extra pay, no stipend! She does not have sick days, they accrue as she works, as do personal days. When she takes

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SAVE THE DATE



JANUARY 17TH

PRIDE Event - EBHS
Basketball Game vs.
St. Joe's Falcons

JANUARY 19TH

ESP Health & Wellness
Workshop

JANUARY 28TH

ESP PRIDE Fair @
Brunswick Square Mall

FEBRUARY 4TH

PRIDE EBTECS Classes

FEBRUARY 24TH

Bowling Night Social @
Bowlero

MARCH 2ND

PRIDE Superhero Family
Literacy Night

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a personal day she must pay the substitute \$50, which is deducted from her paycheck. How many sick days do you have, how many personal days, illness in the family days, immediate death days, and death other days? Feeling thankful yet? Feeling the power of organizing yet? Let's get to a super sore subject amongst New Jersey educators...health benefits! Yes, she pays 100% of her health benefits on her stellar salary! Perspective is everything!!! Yes, she works 37.5 hours a week, however, her contract clearly states she must stay until all expected work associated with her job is complete! Are you laughing or crying now? Yep, I am thinking the same thing...I would never make it home!!! And how about this one...no maternity leave and no job protection! Thanks to the Federal FMLA law, individuals in North Carolina can take time but if you stay out beyond the 6-8 weeks of disability...there may not be a job to return to! Frightening, no??? Lastly, and perhaps most distressing, there is no representation for anything, nothing to stop administration from letting you go at any time for any reason!!! Hello NJEA and Weingarten rights!

Let me close by asking you to reflect on what YOUR association does for you? Although there may be times when you do not agree with all the decisions of the association leaders, there is no doubt that we are in a much better place because of OUR association. It is time to think about your future in the field of education and what will benefit you and your family. It is time to **unite** and put pettiness behind us and look to a brighter future. It is time to **advocate** for the profession and ensure the newer teachers and education support professionals understand the importance of being part of an association. It is time to **organize** to ensure our association, who has provided us incredible rights and privileges, continues to be strong and leaves a brighter future for the newest in the field of education. What will **YOU** do to **unite**, **organize**, and **advocate** for yourself and your 200,000 colleagues in 2017?

THE WALL OF HONOR

The Wall of Honor in the Board of Education meeting room recognizes individuals who have made a significant and/or extraordinary contribution to the East Brunswick Public Schools. Individuals selected for the Wall of Honor are chosen by the Recognition Committee, composed of representatives from the EBEA, the EBPSA, the Board of Education, and chaired by the Director of Human Resources.

The following guidelines have been provided for you in order to nominate individuals for the Wall of Honor:

- The eligibility time period for retired or deceased employees and Board members begins one and one half years following the June 30th of the retirement year and ends three and one half years later.
- Individuals nominated should have made a significant and/or extraordinary contributions to the East Brunswick Public Schools.
- The Recognition Committee will meet to review all recommendations and utilize the established selection procedure.
- Nominations should be well documented and lengthy enough to give the Recognition Committee a well-rounded view of the individual being nominated.
- All nominations will be kept confidential by the Recognition Committee.

The list of those individuals who are eligible this period will soon be available through the Human Resources Department and nominations are due in Human Resources no later than January 30, 2017. Retirees interested in nominating individuals for the Wall of Honor are encouraged to call the EBEA office at (732) 390-6600 or check our website for the list of eligible candidates. Inquiries can also be directed to the Human Resources Department at (732) 613-6710.

NJEA UNISERVE REPRESENTATIVE: TOM HAYDEN

My Thoughts On A Cold November Night

Prologue by Dana Zimbicki: Tom Hayden is our NJEA Uniserv Rep. When it comes to politics, Tom is most concerned as to how politics will impact the lives of NJEA/EBEA members. As your president, I encourage you to be "active" in politics. Even if you do not consider yourself to be a "political person" you can be "active" by staying informed, advocating for yourself by writing letters and making phone calls to legislators, and by being a part of any NJEA/EBEA initiative which promotes public education. Now is the time to unite and organize in order to support pro-education government officials ensuring we maintain the finest public education provided by our teachers and education support professionals.

(Posted by Tom Hayden on Facebook on November 6, 2016, two days before the Presidential Election)

TO: NJ PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

This will be my only post related to national politics specifically for my teacher and public school employee friends. I'm not looking for a fight or debate, just a preview of what could be to come for public education going forward. What already makes America great is the freedom to vote for whomever you wish for any reason you wish and I very much support that. If you disagree with me, no problem at all on my end. But every single day of my life is spent talking with school employees about how much has changed in the last 7 years.

When you vote for our next president, you're not voting for one person, you're voting for about 4,000 people that will be appointed by the president to positions in every department of our national government.

These 4,000 people are largely recruited by the presidential transition team. The chairperson of one candidate's team: CHRIS CHRISTIE.

From [NJ.com](http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/11/what_theyre_saying_around_the_country_about_christ.html): "Now, as Christie is heading Trump's transition team — making him responsible for recruiting people for jobs in the Trump administration..." (http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/11/what_theyre_saying_around_the_country_about_christ.html)

As of this week, four of his top appointees are now convicted felons and he could be in charge of finding national appointees. Worse yet, he's still the likely candidate for Attorney General. And here's my worst nightmare: Chris Christie as Secretary of Education.

If that's not enough, below is what Christie has done to public education in NJ since 2010, by category. It was shocking to me when I put all of this onto one sheet of paper, and I probably missed a few things. I believe the first three years of my career, just prior to Christie taking office, were the end of best days in public education for New Jersey.

This election, for me, is simply about putting an end to any further damage caused by Chris Christie.

EVALUATIONS:

- Replaced local teacher evaluation systems with TEACHNJ which is neither more fair nor more accurate than what schools were previously using
- Mountains of unnecessary SGO paperwork
- Requires SGPs that tie SOME teachers' evaluations to student test scores; system is riddled with mathematical flaws
- You can easily be fired after two years of subjective evaluations
- Corporations profited from the evaluation systems



NJEA UNISERVE REPRESENTATIVE: TOM HAYDEN

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CURRICULUM & TESTING

- Brought in the Common Core that was funded by billionaires and completely up-ended the way successful schools were teaching for no good reason
- Quickly did an about-face and ended the Common Core because it became an unpopular political choice for his own career. Did not help schools offset the millions spent in required materials for Common core
- Mandated that NJ participate in PARCC and continues to support it.
- PARCC required that schools spend millions of dollars for technology upgrades to support the test, but did not help fund it.
- Only state in the nation that requires PARCC as the sole graduation requirement test for students in 2021

CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Brought in more charter schools that siphon the highest-achieving students and money away from public schools, on the taxpayer's dime
- Wants to give school vouchers -- so public money can be spent to send kids to for-profit private and parochial schools

SCHOOL FUNDING

- Gutted public education funding in 2010 as a political ploy and has yet to restore funding to those levels
- Refuses to fund schools properly, fairly and legally
- Proposes a school funding formula that disproportionately harms minorities and struggling cities
- Has failed to improve "state takeover" schools that are almost directly under his authority and will not give local control back

PENSIONS

- PROMISED YOU that your pension would not change; changed it in his first year in office
- No fix to the pension system; now rated as the worst in the nation
- Increased your pension contributions by 2%, but refuses to give you the security that you'll collect your pension upon retirement
- Reneged on a law he signed to fully fund your pension
- For anyone hired after June 2011
 - pension can be changed at any time
 - can only collect at age 65 (minimum 30 years service)
 - part time school employees in 401k equivalent
 - not applicable for disability pension option

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Gutted your collective bargaining rights and mandated punitive health benefit contributions.
- Many teachers now contribute between \$12,000 and \$15,000 of their medical benefits with no end to the increases in sight.
- Wants to end post-retirement medical benefits all together

TENURE & SENIORITY

- Moved tenure from three years to four years
- Wants to end tenure and seniority completely

SALARY

- Many school employees have seen their take-home pay decrease to levels from 2009 or earlier
- Believes you should have a large portion of your salary dedicated to merit pay based upon an unproven system
- Unilaterally put into place the cap on superintendent pay that has sent the "best and brightest" running away to other states

Sorry this is so long, but it's been a long seven years of Chris Christie in education.

Posted by Tom Hayden, NJEA Uniserv Representative

THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

The challenges facing public educators seem to intensify and change on a daily basis. The life of a public education employee is complicated and demanding. NJEA provides a support system for all members ranging from professional and career development, to leadership development, to security. The strength and unity created by 200,000 members working toward common goals is an experience not to be missed or denied.

Please take some time to see how you can make the most from your membership.

PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Professional Development provides a cadre of online courses specifically intended for professional growth including topics such as assessment strategies, goal setting, grant writing, motivational keys, stress management, school safety and discipline, special education issues, differentiated learning strategies, character education, data in the classroom, cyberbullying prevention, and succeeding with difficult students just to name a few. This is free PD offered online by visiting <https://www.njea.org/teaching-and-learning/e-learning-academy>. At the end of the course, a PD certificate can be printed for your PD portfolio.
- NJEA/MCEA/EBEA workshops are also held at various locations throughout the year. Please check the website for offerings on a regular basis. Some of the topics have included: Danielson training, Google Apps, Google Docs, Bullying, and Member to Member Issues
- Please read the monthly publication of the NJEA Review for additional offerings. The Review is mailed to all members each month and can also be found online at <https://www.njea.org/news-and-publications/njea-review>

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

- Leadership opportunities and training is offered at all aspects of the association level. You can become a building representative, run for office, serve on association committees, and help shape education policy. Leadership training is available yearly through a NJEA program called "Sparks." Sparks is a fun, hands-on program for NJEA members early in their careers. It is designed to help you develop your leadership potential. Sparks is targeted specifically at members who feel they are early in their careers, have had little or no experience working with their local association, and are potential leaders. There is no definition for

what makes a member "early career." If you feel that you are early in your career, then you are. The Sparks experience includes lots of exploratory discussion, a safe place to share the trials and tribulations of being early in our careers, and a few off-the-wall activities aimed at giving members a positive contact with the association. If you are interested, please go to the link: <http://tinyurl.com/middlesexsparks>

- NJEA Summer Leadership is held in early August. A variety of workshops are offered over a 3-day period. Courses range from union issues to classroom management skills. Hundreds of members gather at the Hilton in East Brunswick to explore issues, enjoy the company of their colleagues, and face the new school year refreshed in spirit and knowledge.

SECURITY

- NJEA Attorney Network, with attorneys experienced in the laws governing the rights of public education employees and an understanding of public school issues are available to all association members.
- NJEA attorneys are available for personal issues at a discounted rate. Two free 30 minute consultations are also offered to all members.
- NEA Dues Tab Insurance provides a bit more financial security for your family at no monetary cost for you.
- AID-NJEA is a free confidential 24-hour telephone helpline and support system for NJ educators, school staff members, and their families. This helpline is staffed by active and retired educators and school mental health professionals trained to counsel and support their colleagues. AID stands for Assistance in Distress and can be reached by dialing 866-AID-NJEA or 866-243-6532.
- HCAMS – HealthCare Assistance with Member Support offers a confidential 24-hour employee assistance program assisting members and their families who are dealing with prescription medication dependency, drug and alcohol dependency, DUI advocacy, stress related conditions, sleeplessness, explosive anger, concentration difficulties, adolescent problems, family problems, and relationship problems. To learn more please visit www.unionsupport.org or call 1-888-828-7826.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PRIDE COMMITTEE

The PRIDE Committee has been very busy this fall showing PRIDE in public education, and in the staff and students of East Brunswick.

- Our “Learning Across the District” this fall featured staff members and students at Board of Education meetings showcasing the great things happening in our buildings every day. Presentations were exhibited by: Churchill’s drama teacher Lynne Elson; Central’s third grade teachers Allison Pimentel and Emily Mott; Chittick’s third grade teachers Wendy Cukierman and her student teacher Evan Harris; Frost’s third grade teachers Amy Alcantara, Jill Conway and Michele Parke; Warnsdorfer’s second grade teachers Rachel Berman and Cara Chacko.
- Community members who attend the monthly technology classes at the high school, taught by the EBTECS, are enjoying a breakfast courtesy of PRIDE and an EBEA PRIDE mousepad.
- Our October PRIDE event sponsored the high school’s girls’ volleyball PINK game. Staff in each building sold pink t-shirts and sweatshirts with proceeds going to the *Susan B. Komen for the Cure* organization. Pink foam fingers were distributed to all attendees, and a **free** raffle basket was awarded to one lucky fan.
- Most recently the PRIDE Committee sponsored the *Town Talks* meeting on *Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention*. Parents and students attending the meeting were treated to desserts and beverages, an EBEA PRIDE notepad and pen, and a lucky student was the winner of our **free** raffle basket. A follow-up Parent University meeting will be held in March also sponsored by EBEA PRIDE.

Some other upcoming events include:

- January’s EBHS boys’ basketball game against rival St. Joe’s Falcons. Fans will be able to enter a **free** raffle and rally towels will be given to all fans in attendance.
- In February, Hammarskjold Middle School parents/students attending the sixth grade orientation will be treated to desserts and receive a special “give-away” from the EBEA PRIDE committee.

The PRIDE committee is always looking for new ideas and new people – why not get involved?! PRIDE provides excellent opportunities for the community to get to know staff members on a more personal level, beyond what we do in our buildings every day. (*And, PRIDE events are a great way to demonstrate community involvement for Danielson’s Domain 4!*) Contact your Building Captain or PRIDE committee chairperson, Jo-Anne Bijas (jbijas@ebnet.org) if you would like more information and would like to become part of this very active and exciting committee.

Jo-Anne Bijas, PRIDE Chair

BUILDING CAPTAINS

Bowne Munro – Ivy Schwam

Central – Amanda Alessandro & Angela Scarpa

Chittick – Jennifer Anastasio

Frost – Lindsay Grossman & Amy Alcantara

Irwin – Haley Elman

Lawrence Brook – Rebecca Weizman

Memorial – Kathy Mueller

Warnsdorfer – Rachel Berman

Hammarskjold – Elaine Ferreira

CIHS – Kristan Shanks & Caitlin Jarosiewicz

EBHS – Kelly Grotrian & Conor Scott

Administration – Florence Talierno

Education Support Professionals – Lucy Bortono

Support Operation Facility – Karen Deignan

COMMITTEE REPORTS

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

As we head towards a new year, we find our profession under increasing attack and threat. Whether it be from the pension crisis (New Jersey's public worker pensions are now the worst funded in the country), rising health care costs that often outpace salary increases leading to less take home pay every year, the damaging effects of high-stakes testing and its unsupported role in teacher evaluations, or the increasingly dark forecast for America's public education system coming from the incoming Trump administration, the call to action could not be louder. Please take some time to read this article about how government decisions and actions are affecting the field of education.

Although last year we were promised a Constitutional Amendment securing pension payments, Senate President Sweeney reneged on his promise in August and never posted the bill for a referendum in the NJ Senate. He more recently has passed legislation requiring quarterly pension payments. While a step in the right direction, this law lacks the powers of enforcement of the Amendment (there is still no enforceable way to compel the state to pay its fair share). It also requires the fund to pay any costs incurred by the state in the event the state needs to borrow the money to make the payment, making the fund essentially have to pay for its own money. The law passed both houses of the NJ State Legislature and is currently awaiting signature by Gov. Christie. Sweeney has also recently proposed legislation lifting a 10% cap on the Pension Fund's ability to lend money to other state funds to allow the fund to sell bonds to the Transportation Trust Fund (S-2842). This proposal would allow the TTF to borrow money at a lower rate than it could otherwise (mostly due to the high cost of outside borrowing caused by Christie's policies and subsequent 10 credit downgrades during his administration). However, it would also remove the State Investment Council from the decision-making process regarding investments by the Pension Fund in the TTF, instead ceding those decisions to the director of the Division of Investment. NJEA has voiced its opposition to this bill and the Government Relations Committee will make members aware of any changes or developments.

Rising healthcare costs in conjunction with Chapter 78 are also placing an extreme burden on our membership. The law required us to pay a large percentage of our healthcare premium and tied those percentages to the premium, not salary, thus allowing rises in premium to outpace rises in salary resulting in lower take home pay for members year after year with no end in sight. Although parts of the law have technically expired, to date no district has been able to successfully re-negotiate the healthcare premium costs. Future legislative action on this issue will be largely dependent on making sure that the legislators who take office next January are advocates for NJ's public education system and its hard-working professionals.

At the Federal level, President-Elect Trump has named Betsy DeVos as his Education Secretary and she will take control of the Department of Education pending likely Congressional Approval next year. Trump has called "school choice" the "civil rights issue of our time" and has pledged to greatly increase privatization in public education. This could result in less money for traditional public schools at a level never seen in New Jersey. Reductions in programs and course offerings, layoffs, and scarcer resources are all possible side effects of this harmful education policy as it has been enacted in other states. Betsy DeVos is a billionaire GOP donor from Michigan who has fought hard to enact a voucher program in her own state that channels tax dollars meant for public schools to private ones, including for-profit schools (Michigan has the most for-profit charter schools in the country). It is important to note that Michigan charter schools perform worse on average than traditional public schools in the state, yet there has been a continued push to enlarge the program. After the GOP-led Michigan legislature voted down contested legislation that would have called for greater oversight and accountability of charter schools to ensure quality, the DeVos family gave \$1.45 million over the next two months to politicians who opposed the legislation. She has also spent millions of

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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dollars supporting privatization efforts through her family's PAC, the Great Lakes Education Project. DeVos has no experience in education whatsoever and neither she, her husband, nor her children have ever attended a public school. In a 1997 piece for the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call, DeVos wrote:

“My family is the largest single contributor of soft money to the national Republican Party. ... I have decided, however, to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence. Now I simply concede the point. They are right. We do expect some things in return.”

While little is known of exactly what a Trump/DeVos Department of Education will look like, they have already made public their plans to divert up to \$20 billion dollars in Title I funds meant for poor and disabled children to fund school privatization and to create incentives for states to diminish the role of traditional public schools in their local spheres.

The severity of our current situation should serve as nothing if not a call to action for all of us to come together and fight for our students, our schools, and the integrity of our profession. Through concerted effort from many NJEA members and contributions to the NJEA PAC, approximately 86% percent of NJEA endorsed candidates won at the state and local level this November. Our best defense of public education will come from making sure that we have state and local governments that work for NJ's great public schools and their hardworking employees and not in the interest of corporate privatizers masquerading under a banner of “education reform.” The NJ gubernatorial primary will be an extremely important opportunity for the NJEA to help steer NJ policy away from the failed and grossly unpopular policies of Chris Christie and in a direction that helps NJ's students, schools, and education professionals. Members are encouraged to contact the Government Relations Committee to find out more and learn how to become more involved. They can also log on to the members only section of the NJEA website and click on the “take action” button. In the near future, additional information on legislative issues and opportunities for participation will be available on the EBEA website (more information to follow). Our victory or defeat in the coming years will depend on whether or not we all stand together to fight for what's right for our students, our schools, and ourselves.

-By Chris Finnegan and Ryan Dick, EBEA Government Relations Co-Chairs

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The *Snowball Spectacular* was held on November 30, 2016 and it was a HUGE success with over 150 members dining and dancing. During this event EBEA hosted a fundraiser for Elijah's Promise. Elijah's Promise was extremely grateful for the \$450 donation from our generous members. We will return to the Ria Mar in April for our *Spring Garden Party*. There are several events in the planning stage, including *A Day At the Races* at Monmouth Racetrack. Please consider attending an EBEA social event. You will not be disappointed! If you have any ideas for social events, please let us know.

-Colleen Talbot, EBEA Social Chair

MEMBER BENEFITS COMMITTEE

The association is looking for an interested member to fill the position of Member Benefits Committee Chairperson to replace Charlene Delaney who will be retiring in July. Any member who is interested should visit the EBEA website (<http://my-ebea.org/about/committees/benefits-review-committee/>) for guidelines on how to apply.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TEACHER EVALUATION ADVISORY TEAM

What a busy year 2016 has been for us all! With the revisions to AchieveNJ for teacher evaluation, the change in percentage weight for SGPs, and the introduction of *Oasys* and *OnCourse*, it's been a whirlwind start to the year. A major benefit of *Oasys* is the ease in entering your evaluation information into the EBEA database. As advocates of your right to a fair evaluation, we strongly encourage all members to do so as soon as your evaluations are finalized by following these simple steps: 1.) have your evaluation in front of you and your NJEA PIN number and password (last four digits of SS#, if you never changed it), 2.) sign onto www.my-ebca.org, 3.) click on MEMBERS, then 4.) EBEA Evaluation and enter your data into the database. It takes anywhere from 5-10 minutes. We thank everyone in advance for your time and efforts in this urgent matter! This data helps the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Team in determining areas of need and growth for our members. Additionally, with the data collected we can analyze evaluation trends within the district.

At the district level, DEAC (District Evaluation Advisory Committee) has trained, or is in the process of training, administrators on a Danielson Evaluation Model that more accurately represents special education classroom settings. This model is currently being utilized when evaluating all self-contained special education classroom teachers. The goal is to roll this out to all special education classes over the next few years. As we continue to move forward this year, DEAC will be discussing the evaluations of school counselors, CSTs, and ESPs. The DEAC committee is currently looking for interested members to join. If you are interested, please refer to N.Tibbett's email from December 15th for further information.

At the association level, our Teacher's Evaluation Advisory Team (TEAT) has already met several times and is working on any issues that have arisen. For example, EVERYONE SHOULD WRITE A REFLECTION including pros and "constructive critique" of their observed lesson and submit to their evaluator. It is important that you let your evaluator know how you changed your lesson for the future based on what you learned from reflecting on the lesson. Teaching is a reflective craft. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to be part of this committee please contact us at our emails listed below.

This year, EBHS has a new SEAT (School Evaluation Advisory Team) committee that is currently looking to add any interested members. The purpose of this committee is to look at data from each department and create score-cards on what EB Administrators are scoring as a "4" on evaluations in each of the domains. If you are interested in joining this team, please contact tyoselevich@ebnet.org or mkermanshahisampson@ebnet.org. We are always looking for new members and would like to have representatives from the science, world language, and physical education departments. Thanks!

Happy New Year to all of you!

*EBEA Teacher Evaluation Action Team Co-chairs,
Mercedeh Sampson and Terri Yoselevich*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

THE EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS COUNCIL

The Educational Support Professionals Council (ESP) has grown and made much headway this year. We have helped solve problems that were plaguing our child nutrition members, instructional assistants, aides, bus drivers, and we continue to back our Maintenance and Grounds Department, custodians and secretaries. We are delighted to work collaboratively with administration to improve the working climate of all of our Education Support Professionals (ESPs).

To date many of our ESP members have volunteered to help the community by involving themselves in events such as: handing out coloring books regarding the many duties of an ESP at the Mall-O-Ween trick-or-treat at the Brunswick Square Mall on Halloween; sponsoring a very successful coat drive for those in need, to which we received so many coats due to the outpouring of support from the EB Public Schools, administration and the community; we also involve ourselves in the many EBEA Pride events happening throughout the year.

On Saturday, January 28, 2017, the ESP committee will sponsor a PRIDE activity at the East Brunswick Square Mall for the Middlesex County Education Association PRIDE fair. We welcome all members to come join us as we educate the public about the wonderful work we do each day ensuring that East Brunswick students have the best possible education in the best possible environment.

In the spring the ESP Council will be working on cleaning up Butterfly Park so that the East Brunswick community may enjoy this wonderful treasure again. We are always looking for ideas to help our community; if you have suggestions we would love to hear about them.

We could use help from Bowne-Munro, Chittick, Frost, Lawrence Brook, Memorial and Warnsdorfer. We cannot help with issues if we don't know your concerns. We hope you would consider attending an ESP meeting. The calendar of meetings is on the website at www.my-ebca.org. Please be proactive and be ESP Proud!

Lucy Bortono, ESP Council Chair

MIDDLESEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ESP MEMBER BENEFITS CELEBRATION



On November 14, 2016 the Middlesex County Education Association held the annual Education Support Professional Member Benefit Celebration. The event was held at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge and EBEA had 34 members attend this informative event. Each November, ESPs are celebrated for their incredible contribution to public education, honoring all they do in caring for our children and buildings! Without the dedication of all ESPs (instructional assistants, school aides, information technology personnel, attendance officers, child nutrition personnel, custodians, maintenance and grounds personnel, secretaries, transportation department personnel, and bookkeepers) our schools would not run smoothly and our

students would not benefit from their extra care and attention. Thank you to all the ESPs in the East Brunswick Education Association and thank you to the Middlesex County Education Association for sponsoring a fabulous event honoring the work and dedication of all ESP members. Thank you to Florence Taliercio, EBEA Director of Support Staff, for always caring and advocating for our EBEA members. Lastly, EBEA proudly congratulates Lois Yukna, Woodbridge attendance officer and MCEA President, for being the recipient of the County and State ESP of the Year Award! #EBEAProud

MEMBER BENEFITS

Thanks to NJEA – A STRONG UNION – Members enjoy many benefits they never had before such as:

- Right to bargain
- Prescription insurance
- Dental care
- Vision care
- EAP programs
- Major medical protection
- Post-retirement health care
- Income protection insurance
- Seniority
- Professional leave days
- Paid personal days
- Bereavement leave
- Paid vacations
- Paid holidays
- Paid sick leave
- Family leave days
- Sabbatical leaves
- Representation
- Severance pay
- Tenure
- Grievance procedure with binding arbitration of grievances
- Job classifications
- Right to examine and reproduce materials in personnel file
- Released time for parent-teacher conferences
- Health and safety provisions
- Promotional procedures
- Promotional opportunities
- Protective equipment
- Relief periods
- Dismissal and recall rights
- RIF procedures
- Advanced notification of RIF
- Uniform salary guide
- Work standards
- Guaranteed wage increase
- Equal opportunity law
- Representation fee
- Voluntary overtime
- Overtime pay after eight hours
- Double time for Sundays and holidays
- Shift premiums
- Contributory or non-contributory life insurance
- Maternity/paternity leave of absence
- Right to respond to an evaluation
- Tuition reimbursement
- Preparation periods
- Use of school facilities and equipment for association business
- Notification of work assignments
- Sickness and accident benefits
- Jury duty pay
- Just cause/due process
- Protection from unfair evaluations
- Protection against student assault
- Full-time released presidents
- Extracurricular stipends
- Defined workday and work year
- NJEA Convention days
- Pension protection
- Automatic dues deduction
- Right to BOE documents
- Clothing allowance
- Leaves of absence with benefits
- Professional development fees
- Paid curriculum development



SPOTLIGHT ON...

CHRIS FINNEGAN

"It's a beautiful thing when a career and passion come together" and for Chris Finnegan that is absolutely true. Chris is a 4th and 5th grade orchestra teacher at Frost and Irwin. Additionally, he instructs supplemental orchestra at CJHS and EBHS. When he is not in the classroom making music with the students, he is working with the 4th and 5th Grade elementary district orchestra. Chris is also known to volunteer throughout the year for the Central Jersey Music Educators Association (CJMEA) and the New Jersey Music Educators Association (NJMEA) at various events.

Musically, he maintains a busy private studio of bass students and performs regularly throughout the area with various groups.

He also has been a piper with the Pipes and Drums of the Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh in Old Bridge for the past 11 years. Chris is also the Piper to the Regimental Staff for the "Fighting 69th" (1st Battalion 69th Infantry New York Army National Guard) and has had the honor of leading the Regimental

Headquarters staff up 5th Avenue every year in the NY Saint Patrick's Day Parade.

Last year, Chris became chairman of the Cáitlín agus Thomáis Uí Chléirigh Branch of Conradh na Gaeilge (The Gaelic League) and would occasionally teach Irish language classes in Manhattan and Brooklyn. It is quite apparent that Chris loves his Irish music and one of his greatest student moments was having the opportunity to teach his students to sing in Irish and to be able to perform his arrangement of an Irish language song with the Orchestra and Chorus. Chris said, "It was a really great thing to be able to share

with the students and they did a really impressive job with it!"

Beyond classrooms, and lessons, and large groups playing, Chris uses his talent to raise awareness, bring people together, and reach out to the community. He has said "solidarity is the labor movement's greatest source of strength." Last year, when Verizon employees were out on strike because of management attempting to strip away job protections, Chris went to the Verizon store here in EB and played pipes on their picket line for a couple of hours. The music brought a lot of people over from neighboring stores to find out what was going on and

was a great ice-breaker to engage passers-by about the importance of the strike.

One would think "music is his life" but Chris has plenty of non-musical free time too! When he is not playing music, teaching music, listening to music, marching to music... he likes to do things outdoors as much as possible (camping, hiking, swimming, and cycling) and he even shoots competitively.



As impressed as Chris is with his students, we are just as impressed with Chris! Chris also has the honor of co-chairing the EBEA Government Relations Committee. He is VERY passionate about advocating for our profession and our students on issues that directly affect us and we could not thank him enough! We are **#EBEAProud**

CONTRACT CORNER

Article IV – Rights of the Employee

I. All audio-monitoring and formal evaluation of the work performance of an employee shall be conducted openly and with full knowledge of the employee. There shall be no monitoring of the lounges and workrooms.

Article V – Notification of Return/Dismissal Procedure

C. Any employee who has tenure or who is continuously employed for more than three (3) years who submits his/her resignation for the purpose of retirement to the Board by January 15, effective the following June 30, shall receive the following additional compensation at the time of his/her retirement on June 30: for certificated staff, if notice is timely: \$1,318 in each year of the current contract and for non-certificated staff, if notice is timely: \$549 in each year of the current contract. If notice is given by January 15, the employee has the option of:

- Receiving the whole retirement benefit on July 31; or
- Deferring 100% of the whole retirement benefit until January 15 of the following year;
- Receiving 50% of the retirement benefit on July 31 and deferring 50% of the retirement benefit to January 15 of the next following year, provided such deferral is permitted under IRS rules.

If notice is not given by January 15, the employee will receive only 25% of retirement benefits on July 31, and balance of payment will be deferred until July 15 of the second following school year. The employee will not be entitled to the additional compensation stated above. In the event an employee is precluded from providing timely notice due to unanticipated forced relocation, illness, family tragedy, or other documented unforeseen extenuating circumstance, then said retirement shall be treated, for purposes of this paragraph, as though the notice had been given by January 15. All retirement benefits shall be in the name of the employee, but in the event of the employee's demise, shall be paid to the employee's estate.

Article XVII – Deductions from Salary

J1. Employees may individually elect to have a percentage of their monthly salary deducted from their pay. Payroll deductions, in multiples of \$10, can be deposited in a summer savings program and/or regular savings program with the Southern Middlesex County Federal Teachers Credit Union.

Article XVIII – Insurance Protection

A4. VISION - Effective March 1, 2007, the Board agrees to provide a vision plan for each employee and covered dependent enrolled in the Board's medical plan. The vision plan shall provide up to \$100 reimbursement for hardware coverage (frames, lenses, contact lenses) per covered individual per calendar year.

Knowing your contract is up to you, take the time to read a little each day.

The 2015-2018 EBBOE/EBEA Contract can be found in several places:

EBEA website (login required) under 'Members, Contracts' <http://my-ebae.org/contracts/>
Staff Portal under 'Human Resources' <https://staff.ebnet.org/moodle/login/index.php>
NJEA website (login required) under 'My NJEA, My Association' <http://www.njea.org/mynjea>

Or request a hard copy from the Human Resource dept..

NEWS FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

In accordance with the EBEA Constitution, the offices of Vice President, Director of Support Staff, and Secretary shall be filled in odd number years. The offices of President and Treasurer shall be filled in even number years.

Therefore, the Nominations/Elections Committee is now seeking out, screening, and nominating candidates for the following elected positions:

- Vice President
- Director of Support Staff
- Secretary

The filing deadline for election to one of these offices is **February 28, 2017**. Look for a memo in your school mailbox in early February with more details. The slate of candidates will be presented to Representative Council on March 15, 2017. This year's elections will take place on **Wednesday, April 5, 2017**. Watch for further announcements in your building.

CHARTER SCHOOL REGULATION CHANGES AND THE HATIKVAH EXPANSION PROPOSAL



On January 4, 2017, the State Board of Education met to discuss the Governor's proposed regulation changes which would lower the standards for New Jersey's charter schools. New Jersey taxpayers should be enraged with the Governor as he is working with the charter schools in an effort to gut the regulations that make them accountable to the people whose school tax dollars fund their schools. All public schools, including public charter schools, should be held to the same high standards. Governor Christie is looking to create two sets of rules! Additionally, Governor Christie wants to allow charter school operators to hire whomever they like, without the same qualifications required for other public schools. The creation of lower standards for charter school teacher certification is an insult to the dedicated professionals who currently teach throughout New Jersey's public schools. NJEA has urged the Governor to withdraw this proposal as our students deserve better.

Locally, the Hatikvah Charter School has again applied for an expansion, increasing from 450 students to 675 students. For the past six years, the East Brunswick Public schools, along with 25 other districts who have students attending the Hatikvah, have been forced to divert millions of dollars from their public school budgets to the Hatikvah Charter School. The districts do not have a choice, and the taxpayers cannot demand any accountability. The Hatikvah does not have to provide a budget to the sending towns and does not have to present their budget to the taxpayers!

In fact, less than half the students attending the Hatikvah Charter school are from East Brunswick, yet the Charter is considered a single community charter. This is unbelievable! With less than 50% of the students attending the Hatikvah, this expansion is not necessary since there is no need for EXCESS community demand. This expansion request must be denied. Please take the time to fill out the petition against this expansion. This expansion will cost our communities more money, potentially resulting in dramatic program cuts to our school district and increased property taxes.

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/EBEATakeAction> to **TAKE ACTION!**

CHEERS AND TEARS

CONGRATULATIONS



Elenor Hannum, EBHS special ed. teacher, on the birth of her granddaughter Lillith Frances (in October)

Maria Faust, Bowne-Monro teacher on the birth of her granddaughter Lily Maria (in October)

Lilly Ladman, Irwin nurse, on the birth of her granddaughter Hayley Adalyn (in October)

Melissa Goldberg, CJHS Child Study Team, on the birth of her son Leo Vincenzo (in November)

Agnieszka Lazar, EBHS social studies teacher, on the birth of her son Alexander Walus (in November)

Haim Cohen, EBHS computer science teacher, on the birth of his son Eli Meir (in November)

Kristen Bubnis, Bowne-Monro teacher, on her marriage (in November)

Dorothy Demeter, Memorial nurse, on the marriage of her son (in November)

Denise Mariski, Chittick teacher, on the birth of her granddaughter Juliana Ray (in November)

Terry McKibbin, EBHS English teacher, on the birth of his son Caleb Mac (in December)

Steven Eckel, CJHS school security officer, on the birth of his grandson Theodore Raymond (in December)

Eric Sturr, CJHS music teacher, on the birth of his son Caleb Aaron (in December)

Melissa Shelcusky, Lawrence Brook teacher, on the birth of her daughter Gianna Noel (in December)

Val Nugent, EBHS social studies teacher, on her marriage (in December)

Lauren Siecinski, HMS math teacher, on the birth of her son Noah Thomas (in December)

Valerie Nugent, EBHS Social Studies teacher, on her married (in December)

Christine Roman, HMS aide, on the birth of her granddaughter Brooklyn (in January)

Cathy Easley, HMS math teacher, on the birth of her grandson Caden Alexander (in January)

CHEERS

Kevin Brady, for being named Division Coach of the Year (Girl's Soccer)

Christian Portera, for being named Division Coach of the Year (Girl's Volleyball)

Alison Clay, for being named Coach of the Year for Middlesex County (Tennis)

CONDOLENCES

Rose Mezzina, EBHS child nutritionist, on the death of her husband (in October)

Sherrie Scott, Warnsdorfer teacher, on the death of her mother (in October)

Jessica Canfield, HMS English teacher, on the death of her father (in October)

Leigh-Ann Young, CJHS Student Assistance, on the death of her father-in-law (in October)

Donna Morelli, HMS social studies teacher, on the death of her father (in October)

Jean Marie Rinaldi, Irwin special ed. teacher, on the death of her grandfather (in October)

Linda Seligman, retiree, on the death of her mother (in November)

The family of **Isabel McLoughlin**, retiree, on her death (in November)

Mark Motusesky, EBHS PE teacher, on the death of his father (in November)

Katherine Motusesky, Central instructional coach, on the death of her father-in-law (in November)

Christopher Beckett, HMS strings teacher, on the death of his father (in November)

Leslie Anderson, EBHS science teacher, on the death of her brother (in November)

Lisa Kelliher, Memorial secretary, on the death of her father (in November)

The family of **Pamela Volkman**, retiree, on her death (in November)

Donna Blum, EBHS computer technician, on the death of the love of her life (in November)

Henry Bussey, EBHS school security officer, on the death of his father (in December)

Debra Gulick, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, on the death of her father (in December)

Greg Baron, Chittick teacher, on the death of his mother-in-law (in December)

Christina Maffa-Johnson, CJHS English teacher, on the death of her mother (in December)

The family of **Kathleen Maffa**, retiree, on her death (in December)

Joe Chellis, CJHS computer technician, on the death of his sister (in December)

Patricia Loveland, Bowne Munro child nutritionist, on the death of her sister (in January)



GET WELL WISHES

Liza Gudzak, HMS secretary

Harry Morris, EBHS PE teacher

Greg Baron, Chittick teacher

Mary Beth Graydon, EBHS art teacher

Lauren Eberhardt, CJHS math teacher

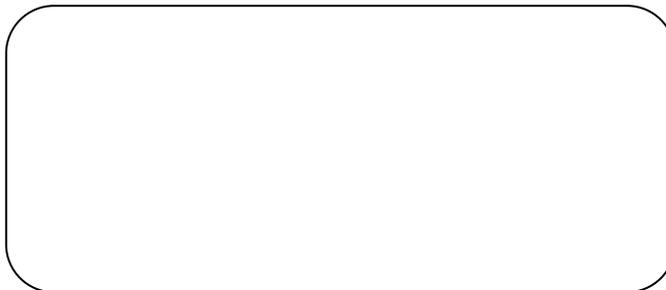




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