



John Rothauser <jrothouser@mceanj.com>

MCEA Newsletter

1 message

Mary O'Keefe <mcealat4@gmail.com>
To: "jrothouser@mceanj.com" <jrothouser@mceanj.com>

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Promising bill passes in Assembly

A-4122 passes, awaits Senate introduction

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Asm. Andrew Zwicker discusses A-4122 before the vote during today's Assembly session. From left: Zwicker, NJEA Director of Government Relations Ginger Gold-Schnitzer, NJEA Vice President Marie Blistan, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Sean M. Spiller.

A-4122, a bill that seeks to eliminate student standardized test scores from teacher evaluation, passed the Assembly by a vote of 52-11-8 today. Introduced by newly appointed Assembly Education Committee Chair Marlene Caride and Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, and cosponsored by Assembly members Valerie Vanieri Huttle, Tim Eustace, and Angelica Jimenez, the bill seeks consistency with the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA explicitly prohibits the federal government from mandating the use of standardized test scores in a teacher's evaluation.

NJEA praised the forward-thinking sponsors of the bill on an issue that affects students and teachers in classrooms across the state. If enacted into law, the bill would remove the median student growth percentile (mSGP) score from the summative evaluations of those educators teaching in tested subject areas. Despite the fact that roughly 15 percent of teachers receive an mSGP score, the impact of the misguided practice is felt by everyone.

NJEA Vice President Marie Blistan and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Sean M. Spiller attended today's Assembly voting session.

"The use of standardized test scores for teacher evaluation damages schools," said Blistan. "It's that simple. Standardized tests are a more accurate indication of life circumstances than the impact of single teacher on a student in a given year. Inappropriate use of this flawed measurement narrows the curriculum and forces educators to focus valuable class time on test preparation. In a time when critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration are integral skills for success in a changing world, it's our obligation to offer more than test prep in our classrooms."

"We have been obsessed with test scores—instead of student learning—for too long in our state," said Spiller. "New Jersey's schools lead the nation in performance, it's time our policies do the same. When the Every Student Succeeds Act became law, it acknowledged that using test scores for teacher evaluation hurt our schools and our

children. ESSA recognized that the misuse of test scores creates toxic competition among educators. We need to foster collaboration and community in our schools, which is the key to our children becoming the leaders of their generation. ESSA recognized that teaching is a team sport. When we place a hyper-focus on single educators, the children lose.”

Since the bill’s release from the Assembly Education Committee one week ago, NJEA members have sent over 8,500 emails and made countless phone calls to Assembly members urging their support for A-4122. Today, the impact of those phone calls and emails was made clear. Before the bill makes it to the governor’s desk, it needs to be introduced and released from the Senate Education Committee and subsequently passed by the Senate. There is currently no Senate version of the bill.

There is legislation to stop the use of the mSGP in the evaluation of teachers. We all must let the legislature that we support this bill to bring sanity back to our classrooms and education!



In the News:

N.J. pension fund lost money on investments last year

TRENTON - The fiscal year that ended in June was a rough one for New Jersey's public employee pension fund as it lost nearly 1 percent on its investments, state officials reported Wednesday. The market value of the pension fund was \$72.9 billion as of June 30, according to the Division of Investment, compared with \$79 billion the same time last year.

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New Details Emerge on Fifth Day of Wildstein's Bridgegate Testimony

NEWARK - During the second Thursday of the Fort Lee lane closure trial-known commonly as "Bridgegate"-star witness for the prosecution David Wildstein took the stand for his fifth day of questioning.



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Fulop says it's about Murphy, and only Murphy



After three years of grueling preparation that included endless travel to political events across the state, meetings with power brokers and fundraising, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop ended his gubernatorial ambitions with little more than a shrug.

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NJEA PAC announces 2016 Congressional endorsements

The New Jersey Education Association's 125-member political action committee has voted to recommend to the National Education Association's (NEA) Fund for Children and Public Education the endorsements of 11 candidates for election to the U.S. Congress, including three Republicans and eight Democrats.

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Do You Know Your Legislators? Let Them Know What You Are Thinking.

How to Contact:

Assemblywoman Joann Downey LD-11

Phone: [732-695-3371](tel:732-695-3371) AswDowney@nileg.org

Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling LD-11

Phone: [732-695-3371](tel:732-695-3371) AsmHughtaling@nileg.org

Senator Jennifer Beck LD-11

Phone: [732-933-1591](tel:732-933-1591) SenBeck@nileg.org

Assemblyman Ronald Dancer LD-12

Phone: [609-758-0205](tel:609-758-0205) AsmDancer@nileg.org

Assemblyman Robert Clifton LD-12

Phone: [732-446-3408](tel:732-446-3408) AsmClifton@nileg.org

Senator Samuel Thompson LS-12

Phone: [732-607-7580](tel:732-607-7580) SenThompson@nileg.org

Assemblywoman Amy Handlin LD-13

Phone: [732-383-7820](tel:732-383-7820) AsmHandlin@nileg.org

Assemblyman Declan O'Scanlon LD-13

Phone: [732-933-1591](tel:732-933-1591) AsmOScanlon@nileg.org

Senator Joseph Kyrillos, Jr. LD-13

Phone: [732-671-3206](tel:732-671-3206) SenKyrillos@nileg.org

Assemblyman Sean Kean LD-30

Phone: [732-974-0400](tel:732-974-0400) AsmKean@nileg.org

Assemblyman David Rible LD-30

Phone: [732-974-0400](tel:732-974-0400) AsmRible@nileg.org

Senator Robert Singer LD-30

Phone: [732-987-5669](tel:732-987-5669) SenSinger@nileg.org

Mailing address: MCEA Office, 3455 New Jersey 66, Neptune City, NJ 07753

Phone Number: [\(732\) 455-5055](tel:(732)455-5055)

Email Address: mcea@mceanj.com



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Mailing address: Monmouth County Education Association (MCEA), 3455 New Jersey
66, , Neptune City, NJ, 07753, US
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