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President's Message by Denise King

Ruby Bridges Headlines NJEA Convention



I hope this message finds you all healthy and doing well. The Monmouth County Education Association's offices have remained open since the summer in order to facilitate help for each member. Most county schools have been working on either a hybrid or fully virtual model, some in person full day, some half day. The county leadership has been working with NJEA, as well as the Monmouth county politicians, in order to express your concerns about school schedules, hybrid and remote learning, SGO's, increased workload, and the health and safety of our members. We will keep you updated on any information as it comes to our office.

We are offering an XYZ's retirement workshop on December 14, as well as some other dates in the Spring. Keep your eyes open for a letter in the mail with a small gift from MCEA leadership.

In order to accommodate the increased number of members in attendance at our events, we have decided to move our office. The new office will be located just down the street on Route 66. The new space is much larger and will accommodate more members for our professional development offerings. It will also allow us to host our Rep Council meetings in house. The county office will be moving sometime in February to the new location. We will send an update as soon as we know the exact date.

I wish you all the best this holiday season. Stay well and know we are here for you.



Ruby Bridges, an American Civil Rights Activist, was the keynote speaker at the NJEA Convention in November. Not too long ago in American History, she was the first African American child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans School Desegregation crisis on November 14, 1960. She reminds us that all of our students deserve equity and the right to a quality public education. NJEA President, Marie Blistan, NJEA Vice president, Sean Spiller, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer, Steve Beatty, sat down with Ruby across a virtual meeting space to discuss her life's work to end racism and prejudice.

LET'S HEAR IT FOR NEW JERSEY For the SECOND consecutive year, New Jersey earns the top overall ranking in our nation's education system! Congratulations to our phenomenal teachers, educational leadership and stakeholders statewide!

MCEA Leases New Office

by John Napolitani



To say this has been a bumpy start to the school year is a complete understatement. As crazy as it has been, men and women in our profession are doing more than ever before. We will continue to educate our children in a professional manner because that's what we signed up for as teachers and support staff.

With this being said, we are getting ourselves ready to move the MCEA office from our current location. We have finished the lease negotiations and will be signing for the space this week. Once signed, we have changes to the office that will need to be made so that it is fully functional for all our needs. The new space is much bigger with a very hands on owner and property manager. We are very pleased with the location and space of this new office.

As we have stated in the past, and this remains the same, we want our local associations to know that you can use the office at any time. The space is similar to our old office, but bigger. We will have a larger open area for meetings and workshops. We will also have a smaller conference room for smaller meetings. We anticipate that the space will be ready no later than March 1, 2021. The timing is perfect because as it stands now, we can't utilize the space due to the pandemic.

In closing, I would like to wish each and every member of the MCEA, and their families, a very blessed holiday season. This will probably be the year that we all need a break more than ever.

Consider Joining MCREA

by Len Sobel

Do you know that the Monmouth County Retired Education Association is fighting to protect your rights and health benefits while you are hard at work? However, with concern and care for our members, many events are being postponed due to Covid.

Do you also know that you can become a life member prior to your retirement? Yes, that's right. You can become a life member by paying the life member dues. You can opt to have the payments done in 5 installments.

By becoming a life member, you can enjoy many of the same benefits that you now enjoy as an active member of NJEA/NEA.

If you have any questions, you can call Len Sobel, President Monmouth CREA at 908-618-9408.

Professional Development Offered Remotely

by Tracie Yostpille



I hope you are as well as can be now that your professional life has been turned upside down. This pandemic has made the Monmouth County Education Association rethink how we provide professional development to our members. The NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division has reimagined how they offer the PD sessions we used to host in our office. They now have a centralized location on the NJEA website called NJEA Learning.

The site was developed in response to the number of requests for support and questions received from NJEA members.

The webinars address a variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- Conversations on equity and inclusivity (Freestyle Fridays)
- Tools for working remotely
- Information management
- Working safely and maintaining privacy in a remote environment
- Professional growth
- Health and safety
- Online pedagogy
- Evaluation in a virtual world

All topic areas have webinars designed for ESP, Certificated Staff, or both. The topic list continues to expand and will be offered through the end of May with the potential to grow as needed. Sessions will be provided Monday through Friday.

Please click on the link below to access the NJEA.org site.

[NJEA LEARNING](#)

If you are interested in receiving notification of upcoming NJEA PD sessions, please update your subscription options in MARS on the Web section of NJEA.org. Use the link below to make sure your contact information is correct and opt in for PD and Member Benefits updates. Click on the link below to make sure you are receiving this valuable information.

[Update Subscription Preferences](#)

Lastly, our professional development goal for 2021 is to provide professional development sessions to our members given by our members. We have Monmouth County members who presented virtual workshops at the NJEA Convention on topics we think our members would be interested in attending. In January, we plan to host a workshop called Technology in the Foreign Language Classroom and another virtual session in February on inclusively educating our LGBTQ students. Stay tuned for more details and for notification of dates for these virtual sessions.

Pro-Education Candidates Elected

by Erin Wheeler and Chiarina Guzik

In terms of elections, we can finally breathe a sigh of relief. We all worked diligently to get pro-education and pro-union candidates elected down the ballot. NEA endorsed candidates, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, have been elected as the next President and Vice President of the United States. With the election of these candidates, we will soon have a new Secretary of Education, as well as Dr. Jill Biden as our first lady, and current NEA member.

In order for President-elect Joe Biden to fulfill his promise of meaningful change for the American people, as well as cultivate pro-education policies, the Georgia Democratic Senate seats are crucial. In Georgia, there will be a runoff election on January 5, since neither of the US Senate candidates reached the required amount of votes to win. [Click here](#) to sign up to make phone calls or text voters in Georgia.

In terms of New Jersey representatives, Senator Cory Booker, also endorsed by NJEA, was re-elected. NJEA endorsed candidates Andy Kim (CD3) and Frank Pallone (CD6) held on to their seats in the House of Representatives. Chris Smith (CD4) also won his re-election.

Unfortunately, our MCEA endorsed Monmouth County Freeholder candidates, Moira Nelson and Michael Penna, ran a diligent race, but did not prevail. Ross Licitra and incumbent, Lilian Burry, will serve another term on the Freeholder Board.

Thank you to all who made phone calls, texted, and completed no-knock door canvassing to contribute to the 2020 endorsed candidates. Your contribution and commitment to pro-education policies is greatly appreciated.

In 2021, the NJ Governor and the entire 120 seat NJ legislature, Senate, and Assembly are up for election. Stay tuned for more opportunities to help elect pro-education and pro-union candidates.

We hope you have a healthy and safe holiday season!

Congratulations to the Monmouth County Teacher of the Year



Congratulations to Christina Gauss, the Monmouth County Teacher of the Year. Gauss, a Spanish teacher at Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School, will serve as a liaison between schools and the Department of Education, and will be involved in advocacy activities for public education. Gauss began her

teaching career in 1994 before joining the RFH staff in 2000. Gauss' colleagues praise her dynamic instructional practice and admire her efforts to bring real life materials and authentic experiences to the classroom. Whether she is incorporating immersion experiences with students, participating in chat rooms with students in Spain, organizing Hispanic Heritage Month festivals, or inviting native Spanish speaking guests to her classroom, Gauss continuously finds ways to motivate and engage her students.

In addition to excelling in the classroom, Gauss has accompanied students on trips sponsored and organized by RFH to Guatemala, Peru, and Spain. After studying in Spain in 2016, Gauss established a relationship with teachers from a bilingual school in Avila that resulted in an exchange program and a sister-school relationship over the last few years. Under her leadership of the Spanish National Honor Society, Gauss not only helps connect students with scholarship and educational travel opportunities, but also helps promote generosity by organizing fundraisers to support Spanish and Hispanic-related charitable causes around the world. In addition to her new honor by Monmouth County, Gauss will share her expertise with world language educators around the country as president-elect of the National SOCIEDAD Honoraria Hispanica.