

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Fairfield EA receives check from NJEA**
- **NJEA unveils reform agenda**
- **West Orange teacher Iannucci receives award**
- **Fall Focus**
- **MLK Human Rights Dinner**

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

- Fall Focus 2
- NJEA Reform 2
Agenda
- Iannucci wins 3
award
- Trenton 3
Thunder
- MLK Dinner 4

Essex Exchange

DECEMBER 2011

Essex County Does It Again

With a strong showing, Essex County elected all NJEA endorsed candidates to office on November 8, 2011. Most of our legislators have been especially supportive of public education. Richard Codey and Ronald Rice were re-elected to the Senate. Mila Jasey, John McKeon, Cleopatra Tucker, Thomas Giblin and Ralph Caputo were re-elected to the Assembly. These candidates opposed the pension/benefit reform bill and have been vocal critics of Governor Christie's education reform agenda.

Further, considering that the attacks on public education are far from over, it was important that these legislators were re-elected to office and Essex County did it again! We ensured their success.

Some of NJEA candidates faced difficult elections across the state. However, despite the redistricting of the state, most of the NJEA endorsed candidates were re-elected or elected to office. Some of our supporters faced difficult elections in that their "new districts" were populated with Christie supporters.

Senator Codey, Assemblywoman Jasey and Assemblyman McKeon were faced with this problem. With the redistricting these candidates were moved to some areas of Morris County, a typically Republican stronghold. However, through the efforts of the democratic party and NJEA members, particularly those members who work in Essex County but live in

Morris County, these strong supporters of our efforts were re-elected. In fact, Codey defeated a former Morris County teacher and county resident.

The fight to preserve our rights continues. Governor Christie is committed to all the items on his "Tool Kit". We will be facing assaults on tenure, instituting merit pay, and creating more charter schools in our communities. All NJEA members must remain vigilant and continue their efforts to thwart the Christie plan to destroy public education.

Visit the MAC section of njea.org and keep MAC boards current in each and every school building in the county.

Fairfield EA Receives NJEA Check



Hurricane Irene devastated much of New Jersey. Schools from around the state were closed because of storm damage. In an effort to help teachers who lost instructional material because of the storm,, the NJEA donated more

that \$30,000.00 dollars to six schools in the state.

One school from the county benefited from this program. Adali Stevenson Elementary School in Fairfield Township was damaged by the storm. To help replace teaching materials,

the NJEA donated \$5,000.00 to the teachers of the school. At this year's Fall Focus, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Marie Blisten presented a check to the FEA executive committee.

Reprinted from njea.org

Fall Focus—Membership Matters



NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Marie Blisten

The Essex County Education Association's Fall Focus was held on October 19, 2011 at the Valley Regency. The theme for this year's fall focus was Membership Matters. NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Marie Blisten addressed local leaders concerning the importance of membership and the importance of the upcoming legislative election. Mrs. Blisten discussed "voting down" and urged all to ensure the election of NJEA endorsed candidates.

Ms. Blisten used her own district as an example of "voting down" as there were no NJEA endorsed candidates in her district. This election is extremely important to all members in light of the pension/benefit reform bill passed in June.

With the redistricting of the state every seat in the Assembly and Senate are up for election. The NJEA has endorsed 69 candidates. All candidates were screened by

county PACs and the NJEA PAC Operating Committee endorsed all recommended candidates. These candidates include 2 Republicans and 67 Democrats.

No one has more invested in the success of our students and our public schools than NJEA members," said Keshishian

NJEA unveils its reform agenda

The New Jersey Education Association is rolling out its education reform agenda, asking legislators to act in the upcoming "lame duck" session to pass comprehensive research-based reform.

Beginning with a [Star Ledger op-ed](#) on Nov. 6 by NJEA President Barbara Keshishian calling for an overhaul of New Jersey's tenure and evaluation systems, NJEA is publicly calling for a broad range of education reforms designed to improve student achievement.

"No one has more invested in the success of our students and our public schools than NJEA members," said Keshishian. "We understand that great teachers are critical to great public schools. That's why our

plan includes an improved evaluation system that helps identify teachers who are succeeding and those who are struggling. And if struggling teachers are unable to improve their performance, NJEA's fair dismissal tenure plan makes it easier for districts to remove them."

"But we also know that teachers are not the only factor in student success," continued Keshishian. "That is why our plan contains other proven reforms, including wider access to pre-school, full-day kindergarten for all students and smaller class sizes in the early grades. We also call for legislation to help increase parental involvement. Research proves that these things boost student achievement, so they must be part of any true educa-

tion reform agenda."

The next step: pairing NJEA's proposals with legislative sponsors.

"In the coming weeks, we will work with public education supporters in the Legislature to introduce and pass bills to implement these proven, common-sense reforms," said Keshishian.

"Our members are committed to making New Jersey's public schools the very best they can be, and to protecting them from those who think that every problem in education can be solved just by testing students more often, or giving up on public education and turning schools over to the private, for-profit sector."

Reprinted from njea.org

West Orange teacher receives national teaching award

Frank Iannucci, West Orange Education Association member and teacher of math and computer science, has received the \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award.

In a surprise ceremony at West Orange High School on Nov. 4, Milken Foundation co-founder Michael Milken presented the award to Iannucci along with students, teachers and officials who gathered for celebration. The event is part of the Milken Family Foundation's 25th Annual National Notifications tour honoring outstanding educators across the nation.

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards provide public recognition and financial rewards to

outstanding elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals.

Iannucci has nine years experience in education. He has taught in the West Orange School District for five years, and previously taught in Bloomfield and Ridgefield Park. He holds a BS and MA from Montclair State University.

Dubbed the 'Oscars of teaching' by Teacher Magazine, the Milken Educator Awards program recognizes the importance of outstanding educators and encourages talented people to enter the teaching profession. Unlike most teaching awards, the Milken Educator Awards have no formal nomination

or application process. Each year, exceptional teachers, principals, and specialists - recommended without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state's department of education - are surprised with the news of their awards.

New Jersey joined the Milken Educator Awards program in 2002 and there have been 20 NJ recipients since program began in New Jersey. So far, \$500,000 has been awarded in New Jersey.

Reprinted from njea.org

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NJEA and the Trenton Thunder offer school assembly programs



NJEA and the Trenton Thunder are pleased to offer free school assembly programs to NJEA members. These programs are offered – on a first-come, first served basis – to public schools up to 50 miles from Mercer County Waterfront Park from October 1 through March 15.

Boomer's Book Buddies, an in-school assembly program for grades 1-4, provides incentives for children to read outside of their school work.

In addition, **Boomer's Baseball Tour** encourages students in grades 5-6 to learn geography and write correspondence.

It's Your Turn with Chase targets children in kindergarten and first grade.

Each program involves a 30-minute school, as well as optional follow-up activities. See the program brochure for more details.

You can invite Boomer or Chase and their friends from the Thunder staff to your school by selecting from the three programs and identifying three possible dates and times. Contact Jennifer Wilkins or Dawn Hiltner of NJEA's Communications Division, at (609) 599-4561, to schedule the program.

Reprinted from njea.org



Happy Holidays to All!!!!

Happy New Year to All!!!!

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

See you NEXT YEAR!!!!!!!!!!

The Executive Committee

MLK Human Rights Dinner
Saturday, January 14, 2011

Win a Disney guest or concert at your school

NJEA and Radio Disney AM 640 present Read Across New Jersey, a reading contest for all Radio Disney 640 AM listeners who attend a public school in New Jersey. The school that reads the most books per student will be selected to win a grand prize which includes a Radio Disney Road Crew Appearance with a special Disney guest on May 18, 2012! The school that is first runner up will win a Radio Disney Road Crew Appearance with a Radio Disney Concert on May 11, 2012.

Read Across New Jersey will run from Nov. 1, 2011 to Feb. 1, 2012. This school-wide project is a great opportunity to get your students excited about reading.

To enter complete the entry form located on njea.com. Print out

and photocopy an entry form for each student in your school. Each student lists all the books they read during their free time from Nov. 1, 2011 to Feb. 1, 2012. Books that are read specifically for a classroom assignment should not be included. The classroom teacher or school librarian should initial the form to verify the student has read the books. As students fill up their forms, give them a new blank one. Collect completed forms and hold them until the end of the contest.

Mail completed entry forms along with a letter from the school principal or staff member in charge of coordinating the contest. The letter should include the number of students enrolled in the school and total number of books read.



Send completed materials, post-marked by Feb. 15, 2012 to:

Dawn Hiltner
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