

EOEA INFORMER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE EAST ORANGE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

From the President's Desk...

The month of March came in like a lion and left out still roaring. April finds us in a place of having great hope. Hope that this pandemic will level out and bring a calmness to everyone around the world. I would like to personally give my prayers to anyone who has been affected by the pandemic. I honor every essential worker who is being placed on the frontline helping others during this trying time.

To all members of the EOEA I am so proud of the way you have tackled and embraced the approach of virtual learning. We have been told teaching hours are between 9am -2pm but I know that many have worked way beyond that time to contact students and parents; review and grade assignments; create engaging lesson plans and activities; produce clips, videos, and live chats to ensure that the profession of education maintains its integrity. You are working and doing it beyond measure.

I am asking all members to stay calm when district and administrative mandates are sent out. I am there with you and agree that at this time sensitivity and understanding need to be exercised more than ever during this time. Nonetheless, follow directives and if it is necessary anything that contradicts our contract or rights will be grieved accordingly. Association Representatives have received the protocol for grievances while we are remotely working. Make sure to check in with them on the process. Representatives should be in contact with you through email or any platform they have decided to stay in contact with members.

Please read updates that are sent out to you. It is so important that you READ all information from your Association so you are well-informed. You will then know how to prepare yourself to react to other information you receive from various sources.

I am waiting to be called upon and informed on how next month (May) is suppose to roll out. When informed I will make sure that you are aware. Questions in regard to pay, extra compensation, evaluations, and FMLA have been sent out to you in previous updates. I do not want to be redundant so please READ what has been sent to you. Adhere to the most recent update.

Make sure you fill out and return you ballot that was sent to you from the NJEA. Return it before April 15, 2020. We are endorsing Petal Robertson for Executive Committee Member because we want someone at the table who understands the obstacles we deal with in an urban district. She is the President of Montclair Education Association and has been working on many levels with the NEA and NJEA. I recommend and encourage you to also select members on the ballot that you see from East Orange.

If you email or text me with lengthy messages I ask that you eventually call me. Clarification and communication are key during this time.



Dr. Dawn Nichol-Manning,
EOEA President

You are not bothering me when you call. That is what I am here for. I am here working with and for you.

Thank you to those who send encouraging words it is highly appreciated.

Keep your head up! We are going to get through this together.

Vice President's Message

by Angel Boose

I hope this e-mail finds you healthy and well. However, the reality is some of you, your family, and your friends have been or are being impacted by COVID-19 in various ways. It is a trying time for educators and people around the world. None of us were prepared for what has happened, and things won't be the same for a very long time. All we can do right now is act in solidarity to ensure we are doing all we can to keep ourselves and our families safe by staying home.

While we are working from home, it is important to remind students and parents that although the school building is closed, school is still in session Monday - Friday. Encourage them to maintain routines for learning in their home as much as possible. Students should still have a structured bedtime and waking up time in the morning to ensure they are rested and well prepared to begin learning activities by 9:00 AM during the school week. We are all navigating through discovering what remote teaching and learning looks like in our Google Classrooms, and I believe each of you is doing your very best.

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Continue to keep up the good work. If no one has said it, I appreciate your dedication!

You should have received a ballot from the NJEA Elections Committee in your home mailbox. Please make sure that you vote for the county and state candidates that you feel will best represent you and what matters to you. Voting will only take place by mail, as online voting is no longer allowed. There is a prepaid envelope included with your ballot. All you have to do is fill out the ballot, seal it in the envelope, and drop it in the mail before April 15, 2020 (you can even leave a note asking your mail person to mail it for you). All ballots will be counted as long as they are postmarked by April 15th. Remember, your vote matters! If you did not receive your ballot, it is imperative you update your contact information at <http://www.NJEA.org>.

Negotiations

by David Zatorski, Chairperson

Fellow East Orange Education Association Members, The East Orange Board of Education approved the retroactive salary adjustments for school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 during the March 24, 2020 board meeting. Salaries should be adjusted to the agreed upon salary guides starting with the April 15 paycheck. Retroactive salary payouts should be on the April 30 paycheck. Please verify your new salary through the Employee Service Portal. Once you log into the portal, select the PAYROLL tab from the center navigation menu. Then select SALARY COMPENSATION on the right side of the screen. Here you will find your updated salary amount. If you have a question about your new salary amount you can complete a google form survey by clicking the HOME tab, then scroll down to the bottom of the homepage and under QUICK LINKS select EMPLOYEE SALARY INQUIRY. If you are unsure of your new salary amount, please visit the EOEa website and review the updated contract. Thank you for your patience during this process. Stay safe during this historic chapter of our lives. We will persevere.

Grievances

by Angel Boose, Chairperson

1. A teacher was written up for not participating in a drill that procedural training was not provided for. (STEM, Level 3)
2. A teacher was put on a Teacher Improvement Plan without just cause. (Costley Middle School, Level 3)

The grievance process will remain in place during our Work from Home (WFH) status. The Association Rep(s) from your school building should have shared the steps with you by now. If you have a grievance, the first person you should reach out to is your Rep(s). Here is what you need to know:

* Level I and Level II grievances will be held via conference call. That conference call should include the member, the Rep, and the administrator/supervisor.

* Level III grievances will be held via Zoom with Mrs. McKenzie, Director of Human Relations & Employee Services and Ms. Boose, the Grievance Chair.

* If the administrator/supervisor does not respond to requests for a grievance meeting within the specified timeframe, the grievance will be advanced to the next level. For details regarding the grievance process and timeframes, you can access the contract online at <http://www.eastorangeea.org> under the EOEa members tab. You will need to sign in for access.

P.R.I.D.E

by Venus Yearwood, Chairperson

Hello EOEa Family,

As we brave our new norms, I want to say we will get through this. However, all Pride events canceled for the remaining part of the year. While the Uniserv and EOEa offices are not operating, as usual, any hosted events reimbursements will be processed. Please follow the provided steps to prepare your reimbursements.

Expedited Reimbursement Process

- Please note that the expedited process will require a scanner and the creation of PDF files.
- If you do not wish to use the expedited reimbursement process, please follow the traditional PRIDE reimbursement process by submitting all necessary original documents to your regional UniServ office.

Jaime Valente/Uniserv
Field Representative
Organizational Development
jvalente@njea.org

Tamika Elder
Program Assistant
Organizational Development
telder@njea.org

Process:

1. Once the project has been completed, gather all original receipts and complete PRIDE reimbursement form.
2. Scan all original receipts, invoices, and reimbursement form.
 - Save the file as a PDF titled with local association name and proposal date (ex: cranfordea330.pdf)
3. Email the PDF to your regional office associate staff person for approval.
4. Your regional office will screen your digital reimbursement submission. One of two things will occur:
 - If your regional office asks for adjusted or additional information, please resubmit all digital information to them before proceeding to the next step.
 - If your regional office approves your reimbursement paperwork, proceed to the next step.
5. Gather all original invoices, receipts, and reimbursement forms and mail them via United States Postal Service (USPS) to:
 - New Jersey Education Association Attn: Tamika Elder, Organizational Development 180 W. State Street Trenton, NJ 08608
6. Reimbursements will be completed via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the local association after approval of your original receipts and reimbursement forms in accordance with PRIDE procedures.

As this may serve as an inconvenience as no one could predict these unforeseen circumstances. Should you have any questions, please email the Uniserv Office.

Be safe and healthy with your families, and let us continue to practice SAFE DISTANCING.

Government Relations

by Jacqueline White, Chairperson



Greetings Members!

1. TAKE ACTION:

COMPLETE & SUBMIT YOUR 2020 CENSUS FORM

According to Secretary of State Tahesha Way, "Census data will determine whether our state receives more than an estimated \$40 billion in federal funding EVERY YEAR. This funding impacts all of us, across gender, race, age, faith and geography. As we work through and beyond this public health emergency, the data will be more crucial than ever in helping us support those who are in need."

An accurate census count is also a critical first step to helping educators address the needs of every child who walks through their doors. The census count happens only once every 10 years; when we undercount young children, the consequences can last most of their childhood. Click on the link to find out more.

http://neatoday.org/2019/11/13/2020census/?_ga=2.87296154.328122204.1586029613-744281086.1586029613

Use this link to explore the questions you'll be asked on the 2020 Census form. You'll also find information about how the Census Bureau will use your answers.

<https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html>

2. REGISTER TO VOTE BY MAIL

Use the link to get registered, check your voting status, apply for vote by mail ballot, and more.

<https://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/vote-by-mail.shtml>

3. CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR STUDENT LOAN

- On March 27, 2020, the president signed the CARES Act into law, which, among other things, provides broad relief for federal student loan borrowers. Click the link below for answers to questions about several provisions of the Act.
<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>
- Use this link to create an account that will allow you to check the status of your student loan. You can also apply for aid.
<https://studentaid.gov/h/manage-loans>



SHARE THE NEWS:

STAYING IN SHAPE WHILE STAYING AT HOME

- Planet Fitness has free FB workouts @7pm daily.



<https://www.facebook.com/planetfitness/>

- Need more steps? The Earth Day Virtual Challenge is a worldwide steps challenge in which participants band together to complete the distance around the equator (24,901 miles) within the month of April. Join in. You can run, walk, or ride your bike to help reach this global goal.



<https://www.thevirtualrunchallenge.com/virtual-race-event/earth-day-24901-mile-challenge>

EOEA HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (HSSC)

by Keith Hinton II, Chairperson

During our March meeting we were able to do a walkthrough of the Bd. of Education at 199 4th Ave. Also at that time we met with the city's Health Department and were able to discuss some important plans being put in place with our current way of living. Below is what was discussed during the meeting.

- New protocol for the nurses to determine student/staff illness. 5 questions to ask. Anyone identified as sick to be sent home.
- Masks may be worn in building/class.
- Nurses have all the supplies they need. All concerns of nurses can be addressed to Mrs. Santos. She emails all nurses daily and is in constant communication.
- EOEA will now be added to the nurse's email list to be better equipped to address the members concerns as they call into the EOEA office.
- Per Dr. Harvest, as a reminder, when out sick for 3 or more consecutive days, staff member must report directly to HR with proper documentation. HR will then reach out to the school and give principal update of your return.
- Dr. Harvest invited Director of EO Health Department, Dr. Griffith, along with Mrs. Santos, supervisor of nurses, to address COVID-19.
- EOHD is in daily communication with Dr. Harvest and Mrs. Santos.
- No confirmed cases within the city of East Orange at time of meeting.
- EOSD has linked with EO City Hall to disseminate concrete information.
- Direct links to EO Health Dept. are posted on EOSD website. Updated frequently.
- Deep cleaning was explained to be a different cleaning process than in the Summer months. Approved chemicals are used.
- Each morning Mrs. Santos id contact with the EOHD regarding any updates from CDC and/ or WHO

** Due to the amount of information shared after EOEA President was called to attend another meeting at the Board, HSSC reconvened at EOEA office to debrief, type up minutes, and respond to EOEA members calls and emails regarding Covid-19.

We must stay strong during these times and trust that this will pass and hopefully we will be back to some type of normalcy real soon. As we receive updates, I will send to EOEA and it will be sent to you.

Social/Communications

by Ashley Greene, Chairperson

During this time of social distancing it can be hard at times not to feel isolated and sad. The Social Committee is here for you. We have a few suggestions for you to try to keep up a positive mindset during this new digital platform. Please be well, and take care of yourself.

Keep it light! Try these 9 ways to stay socially engaged during this time.

<https://hellogiggles.com/lifestyle/stay-connected-social-distancing-coronavirus/>

Home workouts can sometimes help. Try to keep it moving.
<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/wellness/story/best-online-streaming-home-workouts-discounts-online-classes-69619926>

Our at home social relationships can also become stressful, so try to make sure you're keeping the peace.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/conscious-communication/202003/maintaining-relationships-while-practicing-social-distancing>

Upcoming Events: (subject to change or cancelation)

Yankees Game: The Social Committee has purchased tickets for a Yankee game, on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 7:05 p.m. Tickets are limited. Please email me if you have an interest in purchasing tickets. <mailto:ashley.chovit@gmail.com>

One ticket is \$7.00, and two tickets are \$13.00. Last year this was a great event, and I hope this year's is just as exciting

SAVE THE DATE! Our 14th Annual Retirement Party will take place on Wednesday, June 10, 2020, from 6:30 to 10:30 PM, at the Hanover Manor in East Hanover, New Jersey. Tickets for guests of retirees will be \$50. I look forward to seeing as many members there as possible.

REMIND APP: If you have received the invitation, please reply yes to receive text messages from the EOEa. If you did not receive the invite please send us an email stating your first and last name, school, and cell phone number, or see your Building Rep for the code to add yourself.

Spring Teacher Appreciation: The Spring appreciation gift order has been put on hold until further notice. Please understand that we will place this order once regular working times commence.

FAST

by Sharon Johnson & Pansy LeBlanc

The FAST Committee held its meeting on April 2nd, 2020 (which was reschedule from March 26th, 2020) via video conferencing. Due to the current Covid-19 crowd restrictions, the committee has postponed the following events until further notice: Career and College Readiness (schedule for 3/28/2020) and Rights and Responsibilities: Speak UP, Speak Out (scheduled for 4/11/2020).

The FAST Committee is moving forward with "Savvy Sisters and Next Step Book Clubs" which are planning an innovative interactive video book club meeting in the near future, under the leadership of Hassana Shaw and Pedro Azcona (at a date TBD). On behalf of the FAST Committee we would encourage you to stay home and stay safe.

Instructions & Training

by Byron Carter, Chairperson

The members of the Instruction and committee hope that all is well with you and your families during this pandemic. With that being said NJEA has cancelled Professional Development workshops until further notice. The Professional Development workshop: Growth Mindset that was scheduled for April 22, 2020 has been cancelled. NJEA have Professional Development workshops online that give Professional development hours once completed; at www.njea.org also pay attention to the email from the EOEa and the East Orange School District Leadership Cabinet. In closing everyone take care of yourselves and stay safe.

Membership

by Annamaria Economidis, Chairperson

The current outbreak of COVID-19 is having a tremendous impact on your life – both personally and professionally. Teachers are asked to adapt to extraordinary and uncharted circumstances at work while simultaneously managing disruptions and other challenges at home. Your local Association and NJEA are committed to serving you. We are working remotely to continue to assist you. We understand that many members' incomes may be disrupted, and we would like to remind you to that there is assistance. NJEA has a Member Assistance Program. Please visit the following site for more information:

<https://www.neamb.com/pages/member-assistance-program-job-layoff-resources> or call 1-800-637-4636

Also, when filing your taxes for the 2019 year, please be reminded that employees can no longer deduct dues in tax years 2018 through 2025 as a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) that Congress signed into law on December 22, 2017. Finally, any member who went out on a sabbatical or extended leave of absence your status may have changed. Please go on the NJEA website to make sure your status is still ACTIVE. To check your status, go to www.NJEA.org and enter your personal email and password (last 4 digits of your social security number). Remember, if you are not paying dues, you are not an active member.

Wishing you and your family safety, wellness and calm during these challenging times.

Dates to Remember

May 26 @ 7:05 p.m- Yankee Game

June 10 @ 6:30pm Retirement Party

June 15 Last Day for Students



Want to stay connected with the EOEa? Check out our Facebook page: East Orange Education Association and our Twitter page: EOEa_NJ