



## Health Benefits Debacle Ended

### Parties Sign Agreement to Provide Benefits Retroactively

Peter A. Tirri, President

#### Officers

James Joyner (P.E.A.)  
 Vera Schemly (# 10)  
 Gene Harvell (# 11)  
 Sophia Jones (Kennedy)  
 Joe Savastano (MLK)  
 Wanda Koch (HARP)

#### Executive Board

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 Shirley Arturo (NRCS)  
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 Barbara Bourque  
 (Kennedy)  
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 Leah Fabian (# 8)  
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 Gary Kabbash (CJR/# 9)  
 Karen Liguori (#21)  
 Joseph Mazur, Jr.  
 (Kennedy)  
 John Mc Entee (#20)  
 Katie Williams-Milton  
 (PSA)  
 Debbie Patsel  
 (Rutland Ctr.)  
 Todd Pipkin (Eastside)  
 Gil Rhein (#12)  
 Maribeth Strumolo (# 12)  
 Carol Stryker (JFK)  
 Harry Stryker (JFK)  
 Janine Velock (EWK)

The Reduction in Force caused by Governor Christie's draconian reductions in the Paterson Public Schools 2010-11 budget created a disaster in the district. Staff members who felt their positions were "safe" because of seniority had those beliefs ripped away as RIF letters were distributed in May.

Then, in June, "mistakes" were corrected and staff members were recalled. In their letters of recall, the Superintendent wrote that the RIF letters "...would have no effect on their pension or benefits." Unfortunately, everyone did not get the word. While everyone in the instructional staff had heard about the recalls, apparently folks "downtown" hadn't. Somebody pushed a button, sent a letter, completed forms or something and hundreds of staff members improperly lost their health benefits apparently effective July 1. This even though, even if the RIF's had stood as originally distributed, the affected staff members would have been covered under the law through August 31.

No one was notified. Only when staff members went to doctors, or hospitals during the summer did they start to receive rejections from their physicians or the School Employees Health Benefits Plan (SEHBP) Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The District's Health Benefits Department's response basically said "Oh, we're sorry. Pay the bill and you will be reimbursed" which, of course is fine if the bill is a \$7 prescription, but when it encompasses **thousands** of dollars for hospital stays, it is a different situation.

P.E.A. began to receive calls about this disaster in late August, and immediately contacted our NJEA UniServ Office in Wayne. The Associations began to establish a list of

affected employees, and contacted NJEA Legal Network attorneys, who filed a request for injunctive relief with the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) asking that the District take immediate action to reverse their stupendous error.

Dr. Evans directed the Health Benefits Department to correct their error. While they reviewed the disaster they had created, more and more staff members learned they had lost benefits. In response to P.E.A. legal actions, a list of over 550 staff members who had ultimately lost benefits was provided. The error was compounded when it was discovered that the staff members recalled were not the only ones who lost benefits, but many who were bumped into other positions also had their benefits ripped from them.

Throughout this two-plus month horror show, P.E.A was inundated with emails and calls about the growing problem. Blast emails went to all staff about the status. Hearings with PERC and the District were held, and, on October 19, a settlement of the issue was reached by NJEA Attorney Rich Friedman, NJEA UniServ Representatives Sasha Wolf and Rich Loccke and Robert Murray, the District's Labor Counsel. P.E.A. reviewed the negotiated settlement, sought and received some additions to the language, and reached agreement.

As a result, the District has agreed that "... all employees that were or are entitled to Health Insurance Coverage under the collective bargaining agreements have been activated by its insurance carriers and are now covered by its insurance carriers, retroactive to July 1, 2010."

(See Settlement Agreement, page 3)

# Pete's Pitch

by Peter A. Tirri, President



The new school year started almost two months ago, and once again "chaotic" is the term most appropriate to describe the Paterson Public Schools. The pace of Billy Joel's song "We Didn't Start the Fire" from a few years ago seems to be just about perfect to describe what has gone on. Budget cuts, Eastside restructuring, RIF errors, RIF recalls, more RIF's, P.E.A. being blamed for the RIF's, restructuring of APA @ School # 6 (again), restructuring of Napier School, lost health benefits, legal actions, Unfair Practice Charges, regained benefits, hundreds of reassignments and transfers, missing schedules for staff and students, lost programs, "Where in the World is our French program?" ... the list goes on and on.

Were it not for one point, it would be almost comical; the "world" is watching this, and the District has become a laughing stock for the nay-sayers and so-called "experts" who hope, no, want us to fail, and this includes our State Department masters and the Governor.

The State Department has done a pathetic job of improving this district. They have sent Wilson, with his "Paradigm" program, and Glascoe, with his look down his nose at staff attitude and their cronies, and all that happened was that our all-important test scores went down! The State Department has allowed thousands of transfers, ruination of programs that worked, the imposition of costly and useless new programs, and ran the only Superintendent who actually raised test scores out of the district.

Again this year we face the new school year with reduced staff, chaos in scheduling and assignments, vacant positions and missing programs. Worse is the rushed "restructuring" programs at three schools that should have been done in a more collaborative manner, seeking and accepting the suggestions of staff and parents rather than putting the programs in place so we can say we did it. The Academy for the Performing Arts @ #6 is without art and music teachers! The Napier Academy of Technology has none. The major accomplishment at Eastside seems to be a more serene atmosphere, but there remain significant programmatic difficulties to be overcome.

And there is already talk about "restructuring" Kennedy High School and perhaps some other elementary schools next.

P.E.A. realizes that George Bush's No Child Left Behind act creates pressure to do something about schools that don't make their AYP; and we know that we have schools that missed that goal for several years. But we also believe that there has been little or no discussion with staff about the reasons for failure in these schools. AND there has been no focus on family involvement and the kids themselves in these actions. NO, I am not placing "blame" on the kids, so don't even go there. What I am saying is that instead of giving staff the same in-service

for the fifth time, maybe what we need is a dialogue about what works, and what doesn't; the degree of family involvement and "buy-in" of parents to what we are trying to do.

Charter schools are the new "thing" in education. Christie wants his millionaire buddies to make more money that he won't tax on charter schools. **Every single charter school** has a "buy-in" requirement, a commitment, from parents. Public schools don't, and in those cases where some of our schools tried it, former administrations overruled school decisions about disciplinary actions against violators, even when both parents and students had signed on to the program. We still have too many parents who abrogate their responsibility as parents, too many who say "I can't do anything with him, you do it". NOTHING will change until that attitude changes, and I would suggest that is the first "restructuring" that needs to take place.

Kennedy has active academies within the school. They were working until Glascoe and Miller came in and destroyed them. Give the staff and administration at the school the authority to reinvigorate these academies; to bring them back to where they were before the District administration destroyed them.

Our elementary schools have good, caring people teaching in the classrooms. Many of the administrators, however, feel they have been assigned by the former administration to "clean up" the school. What needs to be "cleaned up" was, and is, the administration. Treating people in the schools like dirt will neither increase morale nor increase "productivity". I will guarantee you that beating teachers up, verbally and emotionally, will not spark creativity in the classroom but only serve to produce robots performing the mindless drudgery imposed upon them without really "teaching". Allow the "teachable moment" to be resurrected, as is the case in these "vaunted" charter schools. Allow staff members who want to be in a school to remain; transfer only in those cases where someone wants out. Trust the staff!

Parental involvement, teacher involvement, administrative restraint, respect from administrators toward staff, the end of cronyism and mean-spirited actions by administration. Now there's a prescription for restructuring that will produce results!

Everything else has failed, why not try some things that have never been tried before?

And so it goes ...

# Health Benefits Settlement Agreement

(Continued from Page 1)

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## SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The parties agree that the Association shall withdraw the Unfair Labor Practice charge under PERC Docket CO-2011-113 based upon the following terms:

1. The District represents and certifies that all employees that were or are entitled to Health Insurance Coverage under the collective bargaining agreements have been activated by its insurance carriers and are now covered by its insurance carriers, retroactive to July 1, 2010.
2. The District represents and certifies that such health insurance coverage is retroactive to July 1, 2010, or the date that the employee was or is recalled to work, if that date was on or is after September 1, 2010.
3. The District represents and certifies that it has discussed and confirmed that such insurance coverage is retroactive with all of its insurance carriers, and that employees have the right to all of the benefits and coverage retroactive to July 1, 2010.
4. The District represents and certifies that its staff shall assist employees to submit any claims that may have been rejected as the result of any employee not receiving coverage that the employee was entitled to effective on and retroactive to July 1, 2010.
5. The District represents and certifies that it shall assure through all of its insurance carriers that the above health insurance benefits shall be provided and paid to all employees entitled to such benefits under this Agreement, retroactive to July 1, 2010, and later if the employee was recalled to work on or after September 1, 2010.
6. In the event that any of the District's insurance carriers refuse to make payment and the refusal is the result of the late activation of the employee's insurance coverage rather than the employee being covered without interruption, the District shall be responsible for payment of the insurance benefit to the employee after all reasonable efforts to receive the insurance benefit from the insurance carrier are exhausted.
7. For the purposes of Paragraph 6, the term reasonable shall mean that the employee shall provide assistance to the District, to the extent required by the insurance carrier, in collecting the benefit. In addition, if the benefit is not paid within 120 days of the date of the joint claim to the insurance carrier, payment shall be the responsibility of the District.

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## Battle Over Christie's 1.5% Insurance Surtax Continues

While the dispute over health benefits improperly taken from staff members appears to have been resolved, hopefully with only a few cases that might be outstanding to complete, the battle over Governor Christie's 1.5% educator surtax on health benefits continues forward.

Beginning July 1, the District was supposed to deduct 1.5% of each individual's salary to help pay for health benefits, except that the September 15 payday found that the surtax was not deducted from 10-month employees. The District made that up by deducting two payments from the September 30 check.

However, between June and August, staff members whose spouse was also in the School Employees Health Benefit Plan (SEHBP) were advised that Christie had also eliminated "coordination of benefits" for the couples, and prohibited dual coverage. Staff members were told that one must

"waive" their health benefits, or both would be required to pay the 1.5% surtax.

Staff members realized that the spouse who retained the coverage should be the one with the lowest salary, since their surtax payment would be less. However, the District Health Benefits Department told them they did not have to waive the other coverages – dental, prescription and vision. In these cases, in September, when the surtax was deducted, both spouses saw the surtax deducted. In other cases, even though one spouse waived all coverages, the District still charged both spouses the 1.5%.

P.E.A. continues to collect data in this matter, and will file additional legal action shortly if the problems are not corrected. Affected staff members should send their information to [PatEdAssn@aol.com](mailto:PatEdAssn@aol.com), SUBJECT: HEALTH SURTAX.

# Attorneys Pursue RIF Violations

Claims Filed for Tenured Staff Members;  
Recalls Might Help to Resolve Issues



Hundreds of staff members have been let go by the District as a result of the Christie administration's drastic reductions in state aid. Over 800 Paterson staffers lost their jobs in May, many were brought back in June, others were let go at the same time, and some were given notice on the first day of school in September.

Missteps by the administration, especially in the initial phases of the Reduction in Force (RIF) led to many of the problems. Failing to recognize seniority rights and certification led to a bizarre RIF list that indicated that the first person to be returned was an LDTC, implying that if an art teacher was needed the LD would be brought back anyway. Treating the staff like assembly line workers created the initial chaos. Attempts by administrative staff brought into the debacle seemed to make things worse as the second round of reductions took place in June to correct that which had been done improperly in May took place.

Heaped on top of that were recalls of non-tenured special education staff needed to meet State staffing mandates. These recalls angered other tenured staff members who expected that they would be called back before any non-tenured staff.

Special programs for students and the staff members who filled them have been hit the hardest. Of the staff employed last school year, the following were let go:

- 58% of all Art teachers
- 86% of all Music teachers
- 78% of all World Language teachers, including all teachers of H.S. French
- 50% of all Student Assistance Coordinators
- 52% of all Social Workers
- 83% of all Librarians

With the exception of the Librarians, most of those who received RIF letters held no seniority in any other position and have not been called back. Many librarians started as classroom teachers in some area of instruction and have, as a result, been called back in those classroom positions, not the librarian position. Many other staff members were let go in other positions. All non-tenured staff members were let go, and very few, except in the special education areas, have been returned. Under State law, non-tenured staff members have no right to recall in a RIF situation since they have not obtained seniority rights.

Additionally, and despite the Association's calls to stop the practice, some administrators have tried to bring back "favored" non-tenured staff over those with greater seniority. The result is five months of confusion, frustration and aggravation, with perhaps hundreds of tenured staff members wondering if they will be called back, and non-tenured staff still hoping.

As a result of this situation, NJEA Network attorneys have found themselves trying to work through a maze of conflicting and sometimes contradictory information to determine who is entitled to positions in the District. P.E.A. has calculated, for example, that 47 non-tenured staff members have been employed at Eastside High School. Questions about seniority rights to those positions are now before the Commissioner of Education, as are innumerable more for other positions in the District.

Paterson is supposed to have \$12.8 million in EduJob funds provided by the Congress through efforts by the Obama administration. The State Department of Education, forecasting more bad news for Paterson next year, has warned the District to refrain from using all of the EduJobs money for this year. It is evident that the Christie administration intends to reduce state aid next year as well, and if all of the EduJobs funds are spent this year, the same people who were let go and brought back will most likely be cut again next year.

Superintendent Evans has indicated that he plans to bring back those staff members who provide special subject instruction to students, and preps to teachers, as a first priority, followed by the re-staffing of the elementary libraries. Also included in this group might be non-tenured Phys. Ed. staff. With the remaining funds, other staff members, SAC's, guidance, social workers, classroom staff, etc. might be returned. He has not, however, guaranteed that the staffing levels in those areas will be at the same level as 2009-10.

Tenured teacher recall rights have no end date, so even if a tenured teacher is not recalled immediately, the potential for a recall notice during the latter part of the school year, or even beyond, is possible. A tenured staff member who has taken a job in another location must still be contacted and offered a position before any non-tenured staff member may be employed. Seniority, salary and longevity must be re-instated upon acceptance of the recall position. If the recall is rejected, the "reserved" position in the District is lost and the person is removed from the seniority list.

Like the proverbial guillotine, cuts continue to hang over current and former staff members. NJEA attorneys continue to try to straighten out the RIF related problems. At a time when finances are personally and professionally at-risk, the attorneys know time is of the essence, and they continue to try to get the Commissioner's Office to hear cases and resolve challenges.

# IDEA OF FAILING N.J. PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROMOTED BY POLITICIANS, PRIVATIZERS, CELEBRITIES

By Bob Braun/Star-Ledger Columnist

**NEWARK** — It's a newly popular idea: New Jersey's public schools fail. An idea promoted by politicians on the national prowl, privatizers who'll sell anything for a profit, and clueless celebrities who live thousands of miles away and believe Tony Soprano really lives here.

And it's preposterous.

New Jersey has some of the best public schools in the nation. Ask admissions directors of the most selective colleges — the Ivies and Stanford and MIT and liberal arts colleges like Amherst and Haverford. Check out results from national tests like the National Assessment of Educational Progress — New Jersey ranks in the top five.

Some of the best schools — because it has some of the richest communities in the nation.

The state also has some of the worst public schools — because it also has some of the poorest and most racially segregated communities in America.

Wealth and achievement are inextricably linked. Give the College Board, the agency that produces the SAT Reasoning Test, your family income numbers and your race and educational level of your parents and it will predict your scores and almost always be right.

"There is far more to this than programs and buildings, obvious things you can buy with money," says Joseph DePierro, dean of the Seton Hall College of Education. "There are all the issues related to living in poverty."

That doesn't mean poor children can't learn. They can and do. What it means is educating poor kids is expensive. Anyone who believes poverty doesn't affect learning hasn't read Dickens.

The best analysis of education now isn't strictly about schools, it's evidence compiled by Princeton's Larry Bartels about the dangerously widening income gap between rich and poor, the worst since the Depression. It distorts our institutions — and our attitudes. But that — to steal a phrase — is an inconvenient truth. Something many, especially in the midst of a grinding, relentless recession, don't want to hear. Something tax-cutting politicians don't want to face.

Like fighting a war, battling failure in the schools is costly — but we don't mind going after the Taliban, no matter the cost.

So, because we don't like spending money on schools, we'll change the subject. Bash teachers, envy their secure jobs and pensions because, in the nonunion private sector, secure jobs with good pensions disappeared without a fight. Teachers went to jail to win those rights.

We'll pretend — as we saw on Oprah Winfrey — that millionaires giving some of their stock away will make up for the lack of public commitment. Mark Zuckerberg's pledge of stock doesn't even make up for the state aid cuts imposed this year — and will never match the \$400 million lost to a "clerical error." Self-congratulatory cheerleading is cheap.

"This is a very dangerous moment for public education," says Paul Tractenberg, the Rutgers law professor who knows the link between money and schooling. "Instead of facing up to our responsibilities to support the schools, we are tearing them apart. We are destroying the very values that created the public school system."

Public schooling is a value as well as an institution. Fostering a democratic, egalitarian America. Reject that value and you change the country in unknowable, maybe dangerous, ways.

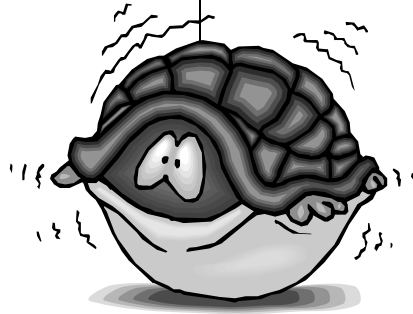
We have lost patience. And confidence. We fear the future — and faith in public schools is faith in

the future. We ricochet from policy to policy, never waiting to see what works. Impose a set of standards, a set of tests, a set of curriculum guides, then change it all in a few years.

"Every decade or so, a new crisis and we change things around," says DePierro.

More than 20 years ago, our leaders decided the state should take over failing school districts. With no Plan B if it didn't work — and no formal system established to evaluate whether it did and, if it didn't, why it didn't. Different governors and different commissioners expected different things of the schools — and then they were gone.

"We have made progress," says Richard DeLisi, dean of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education. "But it all takes time and patience and consistency. We don't seem to want to give reform the sustained commitment it requires."



# District Fails to Pay Increments

## P.E.A. Challenges Decision in PERC

When the staff members of the P.E.A. overwhelmingly voted to approve the 2008-10, they did so partially on the assurances of both the NJEA and the Superintendent of Schools that they would receive their increments in 2010. This was an important feature of the two-year agreement between the District and the Association.

July 15, however, found that the twelve-month employees who were to be the first P.E.A. members to receive their new paycheck amounts not only had not received their increments, but their pay was reduced because of the Governor Bully's 1.5% tax on their health benefits (OK, it's not a tax, but it's the same thing).

When the Association learned about this failure, we immediately contacted NJEA and demanded that attorneys do everything they could to force the District to pay the promised increments.

The District is apparently trying to stretch the decision in the *Neptune Township* case to include two-year agreements. In that decision, the Courts ruled that increments could not be paid at the end of a three-year agreement, unless a successor contract was in place, because after three years it was possible that there would be no Board of Education members on the Board who had reached agreement about the fourth year.

P.E.A. President Pete Tirri met with State District Superintendent Donnie W. Evans who indicated that in order to pay the increments, he needed approval of the Commissioner of Education who, at the time, was Brett Schundler. Since then, as you know, Schundler was fired in a fit of temper by the Governor.



As a result, yet another Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) was filed against the District with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) seeking an order to pay the increments. In its complaint the Association stated that "The refusal to

pay increases by the District interferes with the negotiations process, is a unilateral alteration of the status quo and *per se* illegal refusal to negotiate in good faith. Such conduct is/will irreparably harming/harm members, impacts the good faith negotiations process, which requires the maintenance of the status quo and established terms and conditions of employment." P.E.A. further claimed

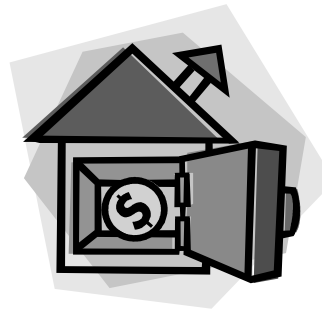
that "The payment of salary increases to unit members does not contradict the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 18A:29-4.1*, nor does it contradict the *Bd. Of Ed. of Tp. Neptune v. Neptune Tp. Ed.* (1996) inasmuch as the negotiated agreement involved is of two-year duration and not three years ( as was the case in the *Neptune* decision).

In filing the charges, P.E.A. claimed the District committee and Unfair Labor Practice, and sought, an Order:

- ▶ finding that the District had violated the law,
- ▶ directing the District to pay salary, longevity and equivalency increases,
- ▶ restraining the District from refusing to act in the matter
- ▶ to pay such increases back to July 1, 2010.



The PERC judge, after hearings, issued an order in agreement with the Association related to the back pay of the increments due to our members. He did not require payment of new longevity or equivalency, ruling that these payments were not approved in the *Neptune* decision.



As is the norm with the District, their lawyers have now issued a request for reconsideration of the decision, claiming, in effect the PERC judge was wrong, and asking the full PERC Commission to hear the case.

"We expect that someone within the administration, either in Paterson or Trenton, has made a decision that they are going to fight this as far as they can," stated P.E.A. President Pete Tirri. "Whoever has made this 'decision' has plenty of money to pay the legal fees – our money that they have improperly withheld – and obviously plan to squander it in this fight." In the meantime, P.E.A. has requested that the District take the money that has been ordered to be paid to staff in an untouchable account so when the legal proceeding are completed, the money will be available to the staff.

As more information or decisions become available, P.E.A. will advise its members.



## What 'Superman' got wrong, point by point

*This was written by Rick Ayers, a former high school teacher, founder of Communication Arts and Sciences small school at Berkeley High School, and currently adjunct professor in teacher education at the University of San Francisco. He is the co-author, with his brother William Ayers, of the forthcoming "Teaching the Taboo" from Teachers College Press. This post is long, but it is worth your time.*

By Rick Ayers

While the education film *Waiting For Superman* has moving profiles of students struggling to succeed under difficult circumstances, it puts forward a sometimes misleading and other times dishonest account of the roots of the problem and possible solutions.

The amped-up rhetoric of crisis and failure everywhere is being used to promote business-model reforms that are destabilizing even in successful schools and districts. A panel at NBC's [Education Nation Summit](#), taking place in New York today and tomorrow, was originally titled "Does Education Need a Katrina?" Such disgraceful rhetoric undermines reasonable debate.

Let's examine these issues, one by one:

**\*Waiting for Superman says that lack of money is not the problem in education.**

Yet the exclusive charter schools featured in the film receive large private subsidies. Two-thirds of Geoffrey Canada's [Harlem Children's Zone](#) funding comes from private sources, effectively making the charter school he runs in the zone a highly resourced private school.

[Promise Academy](#) is in many ways an excellent school, but it is dishonest for the filmmakers to say nothing about the funds it took to create it and the extensive social supports including free medical care and counseling provided by the zone.

In New Jersey, where court decisions mandated similar programs, such as high quality pre-kindergarten classes and extended school days and social services in the poorest urban districts, achievement and graduation rates increased while gaps started to close. But public funding for those programs is now being cut and progress is being eroded. Money matters! Of course, money will not solve all problems (because the problems are more systemic than the resources of any

given school) – but the off-handed rejection of a discussion of resources is misleading.

**\*Waiting for Superman implies that standardized testing is a reasonable way to assess student progress.**

The debate of "how to raise test scores" strangles and distorts strong education. Most test score differences stubbornly continue to reflect parental income and neighborhood/zip codes, not what schools do. As opportunity, health and family wealth increase, so do [test scores](#).

This is not the fault of schools but the inaccuracy, and the internal bias, in the tests themselves.

Moreover, the tests are too narrow (on only certain subjects with only certain measurement tools). When schools focus exclusively on boosting scores on standardized tests, they reduce teachers to test-prep clerks, ignore important subject areas and critical thinking skills, dumb down the curriculum and leave children less prepared for the future. We need much more authentic assessment to know if schools are doing well and to help them improve.

**\*Waiting for Superman ignores overall problems of poverty.**

Schools must be made into sites of opportunity, not places for the rejection and failure of millions of African American, Chicano Latino, Native American, and immigrant students. But schools and teachers take the blame for huge social inequities in housing, health care, and income.

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# Superman Exposed

(Continued)

Income disparities between the richest and poorest in U.S. society have reached record levels between 1970 and today. Poor communities suffer extensive traumas and dislocations.

Homelessness, the exploitation of immigrants, and the closing of community health and counseling clinics, are all factors that penetrate our school communities. Solutions that punish schools without addressing these conditions only increase the marginalization of poor children.

## **\*Waiting for Superman says teachers' unions are the problem.**

Of course unions need to be improved – more transparent, more accountable, more democratic and participatory – but before teachers unionized, the disparity in pay between men and women was disgraceful and the arbitrary power of school boards to dismiss teachers or raise class size without any resistance was endemic.

Unions have historically played leading roles in improving public education, and most nations with strong public educational systems have strong teacher unions.

According to [this piece in The Nation](#), "In the Finnish education system, much cited in the film as the best in the world, teachers are – gasp! – unionized and granted tenure, and families benefit from a cradle-to-grave social welfare system that includes universal daycare, preschool and health care, all of which are proven to help children achieve better results in school."

In fact, even student teachers have a union in Finland and, overall, nearly 90% of the Finnish labor force is unionized. The [demonization of unions](#) ignores the real evidence.

## **\*Waiting for Superman says teacher education is useless.**

The movie touts the benefits of fast track and direct entry to teaching programs such as [Teach for America](#), but the country with the highest achieving students, Finland, also has highly educated teachers. A 1970 reform of Finland's education system mandated that all teachers above the kindergarten level have at least a master's degree. Today that country's students have the highest math and science literacy, as measured by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), of all the [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD) member countries.

## **\*Waiting for Superman decries tenure as a drag on teacher improvement.**

Tenured teachers cannot be fired without due process and a good reason: they can't be fired because the boss wants to hire his cousin, or because the teacher is gay (or black or...), or because they take an unpopular position on a public issue outside of school.

A recent survey found that most principals agreed that they had the authority to fire a teacher if they needed to take such action. It is interesting to note that when teachers are evaluated through a union-sanctioned peer process, more teachers are put into retraining programs and dismissed than through administration-only review programs.

Overwhelmingly teachers want students to have outstanding and positive experiences in schools.

## **\*Waiting for Superman says charter schools allow choice and better educational innovation.**

Charters were first proposed by the teachers' unions to allow committed parents and teachers to create schools that were free of administrative bureaucracy and open to experimentation and innovation, and some excellent charters have set examples. But thousands of hustlers and snake oil salesmen have also jumped in.

While teacher unions are vilified in the film, there is no mention of charter corruption or profiteering. A recent [national study by CREDO](#), The Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University, concludes that only 17% of charter schools have better test scores than traditional public schools, 46% had gains that were no different than their public counterparts, and 37% were significantly worse.

While a better measure of school success is needed, even by their own measure, the project has not succeeded. A recent [Mathematica Policy Research study](#) came to similar conclusions. And the Education Report, "[The Evaluation of Charter School Impacts](#)," concludes, "On average, charter middle schools that hold lotteries are neither more nor less successful than traditional public schools in improving student achievement, behavior, and school progress." Some fantastic education is happening in charter schools, especially those initiated by communities and led by teachers and community members. But the use of charters as a battering ram for those who would outsource and privatize education in the name of "reform" is sheer political opportunism.

(Continued on next page)

# Superman Exposed

(Continued)

**\*Waiting for Superman glorifies lotteries for admission to highly selective and subsidized charter schools as evidence of the need for more of them.**

If we understand education as a civil right, even a human right as defined by the [U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), we know it can't be distributed by a lottery. We must guarantee all students access to high quality early education, highly effective teachers, college and work-preparatory curricula and equitable instructional resources like good school libraries and small classes. A right without a clear map of what that right protects is an empty statement.

It is not a sustainable public policy to allow more and more public school funding to be diverted to privately subsidized charters while public schools become the schools of last resort for children with the greatest educational needs. In *Waiting for Superman*, families are cruelly paraded in front of the cameras as they wait for an admission lottery in an auditorium where the winners' names are pulled from a hat and read aloud, while the losing families trudge out in tears with cameras looming in their faces – in what amounts to family and child abuse.

**\*Waiting for Superman says competition is the best way to improve learning.**

Too many people involved in education policy are dazzled by the idea of “market forces” improving schools. By setting up systems of competition, Social Darwinist struggles between students, between teachers, and between schools, these education policy wonks are distorting the educational process. Teachers will be motivated to gather the most promising students, to hide curriculum strategies from peers, and to cheat; principals have already been caught cheating in a desperate attempt to boost test scores. And children are worn out in a sink-or-swim atmosphere that threatens them with dire life outcomes if they are not climbing to the top of the heap.

In spite of the many millions of dollars poured into expounding the theory of paying teachers for higher student test scores (sometimes mislabeled as ‘merit pay’), a [new study by Vanderbilt University's National Center on Performance Incentives](#) found that the use of merit pay for teachers in the Nashville school district produced no difference even according to their measure, test outcomes for students.

**\*Waiting for Superman says good teachers are key to successful education. We agree. But Waiting for Superman only contributes to the teacher-bashing**

**culture which discourages talented college graduates from considering teaching and drives people out of the profession.**

According to the Department of Education, the country will need 1.6 million new teachers in the next five years. Retention of talented teachers is one key. Good teaching is about making connections to students, about connecting what they learn to the world in which they live, and this only happens if teachers have history and roots in the communities where they teach.

But a recent [report by the nonprofit National Commission on Teaching and America's Future](#) says that “approximately a third of America's new teachers leave teaching sometime during their first three years of teaching; almost half leave during the first five years. In many cases, keeping our schools supplied with qualified teachers is comparable to trying to fill a bucket with a huge hole in the bottom.” Check out the reasons teachers are being driven out in Katy Farber's book, ["Why Great Teachers Quit: And How We Might Stop the Exodus."](#) (Corwin Press).

**\*Waiting for Superman says “we're not producing large numbers of scientists and doctors in this country anymore. . . This means we are not only less educated, but also less economically competitive.”**

But [Business Week \(10/28/09\)](#) reported that “U.S. colleges and universities are graduating as many scientists and engineers as ever,” yet “the highest performing students are choosing careers in other fields.” In particular, the study found, “many of the top students have been lured to careers in finance and consulting.” It's the market, and the disproportionately high salaries paid to finance specialists, that is misdirecting human resources, not schools.

**\*Waiting for Superman promotes a nutty theory of learning which claims that teaching is a matter of pouring information into children's heads.**

In one of its many little cartoon segments, the film purports to show how kids learn. The top of a child's head is cut open and a jumble of factoids is poured in. Ouch! Oh, and then the evil teacher union and regulations stop this productive pouring project. The film-makers betray a lack of understanding of how people actually learn, the active and engaged participation of students in the learning process. They ignore the social construction of knowledge, the difference between deep learning and rote memorization.

(Continued on next page)

# Superman Exposed

(Continued)

The movie would have done a service by showing us what excellent teaching looks like, and addressing the valuable role that teacher education plays in preparing educators to practice the kind of targeted teaching that reaches all students. It should have let teachers' voices be heard.

**\*Waiting for Superman promotes the idea that we are in a dire war for US dominance in the world.**

The poster advertising the film shows a nightmarish battlefield in stark gray, with a little white girl sitting at a desk in the midst of it. The text: "The fate of our country won't be decided on a battlefield. It will be determined in a classroom."

This is a common theme of the so-called reformers: We are at war with India and China and we have to out-math them and crush them so that we can remain rich and they can stay in the sweatshops. But really, who declared this war? When did I as a teacher sign up as an officer in this war? And when did that 4th grade girl become a soldier in it? Instead of this new educational Cold War, perhaps we should be helping kids imagine a world of global cooperation, sustainable economies, and equity.

**\*Waiting for Superman says federal "Race to the Top" education funds are being focused to support students who are not being served in other ways.**

According to a [study](#) by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and others, Race to the Top funds are benefiting affluent or well-to-do, white, and "abled" students. So the outcome of No Child Left Behind and [Race to the Top](#) has been more funding for schools that are doing well and more discipline and narrow test-preparation for the poorest schools.

**\*Waiting for Superman suggests that teacher improvement is a matter of increased control and discipline over teachers.**

Dan Brown, a teacher in the [SEED charter school](#) featured in the film, points out that successful schools involve teachers in strong collegial conversations. Teachers need to be accountable to a strong educational plan, without being terrorized. Good teachers, which is the vast majority of them, [are seeking this kind of support](#) from their leaders.

**\*Waiting for Superman proposes a reform "solution" that exploits the feminization of the field of teaching; it proposes that teachers just need a few good men with hedge funds (plus D.C. Schools Chancellor Michelle**

**Rhee with a broom) to come to the rescue.**

Teaching has been historically devalued – teachers are less well compensated and have less control of their working conditions than other professionals – because of its associations with women.

For example, 97% of preschool and kindergarten teachers are women, and this is also the least well-compensated sector of teaching; [in 2009, the lowest 10% earned \\$30,970 to \\$34,280; the top 10% earned \\$75,190 to \\$80,970.](#) () By comparison the top 25 hedge fund managers took in \$25 billion in 2009, enough to hire 658,000 new teachers.

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*Waiting for Superman* could and should have been an inspiring call for improvement in education, a call we desperately need to mobilize behind.

That's why it is so shocking that the message was hijacked by a narrow agenda that undermines strong education. It is stuck in a framework that says that reform and leadership means doing things, like firing a bunch of people (Rhee) or "turning around" schools (Education Secretary Arne Duncan) despite the fact that there's no research to suggest that these would have worked, and there's now evidence to show that they haven't.

Reform must be guided by community empowerment and strong evidence, not by ideological warriors or romanticized images of leaders acting like they're doing something, anything. *Waiting for Superman* has ignored deep historical and systemic problems in education such as segregation, property-tax based funding formulas, centralized textbook production, lack of local autonomy and shared governance, de-professionalization, inadequate special education supports, differential discipline patterns, and the list goes on and on.

People seeing *Waiting for Superman* should be mobilized to improve education. They just need to be willing to think outside of the narrow box that the film-makers have constructed to define what needs to be done.

*Thanks for ideas and some content from many teacher publications, and especially from Monty Neill, Jim Horn Lisa Guisbond, Stan Karp, Erica Meiners, Kevin Kumashiro, Ilene Abrams, Bill Ayers, and Therese Quinn.*

# Education experts say Gov. Christie's teacher merit pay can do more harm than good for students

By Jessica Calefati/The Star-Ledger



Jerry McCrea/The Star-Ledger  
Governor Christie unveils his package of education reforms at the Cooper Civic Center in Old Bridge.

**TRENTON** — Gov. Chris Christie's

plan to separate educators who deserve raises from those who deserve pink slips using student achievement data will not improve test scores and could force effective teachers out of the profession, according to education experts and two recent reports.

Christie formally announced his proposals for merit pay and tenure reform at a town hall meeting in Old Bridge Tuesday. Just before the event began, Christie signed an executive order creating a task force on teacher effectiveness. Its nine members will design a statewide system that counts student test data for at least 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation, a requirement that worries some lawmakers and scholars alike.

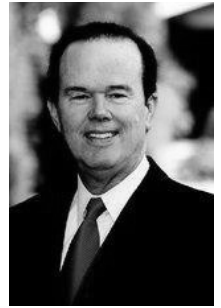
But Assembly Education Committee Chairman Patrick Diegnan said merit pay will limit cooperation among teaching staffs. Diegnan, a Democratic assemblyman from Middlesex County, also said tenure reform that discredits experience in the classroom or advanced degree attainment, an idea Christie supports, is counter-intuitive.

"Merit pay sounds great, it's a great headline, but teaching kids is different than making cars. There is no production manager pointing out loose hubcaps," Diegnan said. "Those performing the greatest miracles in the classroom are often dealing with kids whose successes are the most difficult to gauge."

Diegnan's concerns about the Republican governor's proposals — which will require legislative action from a statehouse controlled by Democrats — are reflected in research published in the past five weeks by Vanderbilt University and the Economic Policy Institute, a think tank based in Virginia Beach.

In the first scientifically rigorous test of merit pay, Vanderbilt scholars offered between \$5,000 and \$15,000 to Nashville math teachers whose students scored higher than expected on a statewide exam.

Star-Ledger file photo Assemblyman Education Committee Chairman Patrick Diegnan in a 2009 photo.



But the incentive was a bust, they found. Except for some temporary gains during the three years studied, students did not progress any faster in classrooms where teachers were offered bonuses.

"The experiment was intended to test the notion that rewarding teachers for improved scores would cause scores to rise," the report says. "By and large, results did not confirm this hypothesis."

Citing the Vanderbilt study, education historian and New York University professor Diane Ravitch said merit pay is a "pointless waste of money" that "will not improve student performance" and "will destroy collaboration among teachers."

"One of the signature issues of businesspeople and conservative Republicans for the past 30 years has been merit pay," Ravitch said on her blog. "They believe in competition, and they believe that financial rewards can be used to incentivize better performance, so it seems natural for them to conclude that merit pay or performance pay would incentivize teachers to produce better results."

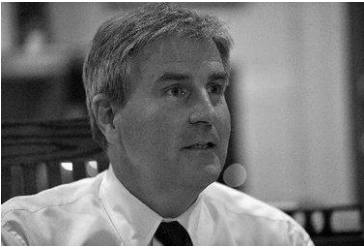
A report published by the Economic Policy Institute and authored by a slew of education reform heavyweights says Christie's proposal to rely on student test score data for at least 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation is "unwise."

"There is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians, and economists that student test scores alone are not sufficiently reliable and valid indicators of teacher effectiveness to be used in high stakes personnel decisions," the paper says.

Though Christie has not specified how he wants student test data to influence teacher evaluations, he will likely follow states like Colorado, Louisiana and Tennessee that support value-added measurement (VAM), a complicated statistical formula that's supposed to equalize teacher performance when student test scores are used.

(See CHRISTIE WRONG ON MERIT PAY, PAGE 9)

## Ex-education chief says Christie was focused on battle with NJEA in Race to the Top application



ADENA STEVENS/For The Star-Ledger  
Former education chief Bret Schundler at his home in Jersey City, Aug. 27, 2010.

**TRENTON** — So far, the biggest fight in the ongoing controversy over the state's failed Race to the Top application has been about an accidental clerical error that cost the state \$400 million. A deeper look at the state's application may tell a different story.

Fired education commissioner Bret Schundler said, in interviews as he prepared to testify before the state Senate Thursday morning, the bigger problem was Gov. Chris Christie's insistence on perpetuating his battle with New Jersey's leading teachers union. If Christie had permitted Schundler to submit a Race to the Top application endorsed by the New Jersey Education Association, the state would have racked up more than enough points to win money in the competition for federal education reform dollars — despite the mistake that Schundler has taken the blame for.

"We have an opportunity to win here, with union support, which is a rare thing," Schundler said he told Christie. "He said he didn't care about the money ... He said he hadn't gone through hell with (the NJEA) so he could then cave in to them now."

Schundler's remarks shed new light on the controversial events of Memorial Day weekend when he and the NJEA announced a surprising agreement on the federal grant application's proposals. Almost immediately, the governor reneged on the deal and filed a different submission in Washington, one which the teachers union opposed. At the time, Schundler took the blame for acting without the governor's approval, a mea culpa that allowed him to keep his job even as some Trenton insiders suggested Christie would dismiss him right then.

Christie spokeswoman Maria Comella would not comment on Schundler's statements. NJEA spokesman Steve Wollmer said the union had been

willing to make concessions. "But that wasn't enough for the governor," Wollmer said. "The governor made clear that he wasn't interested in any of that collaboration. He basically said, 'I don't care.'"

The Race to the Top application and ultimate loss has been the most damaging controversy to hit the young Christie administration. It preoccupied the governor and his top aides both in the run-up to the June submission and then took up weeks of their attention after the loss was announced in August.

New Jersey lost the federal aid competition by three points. And days later Christie fired Schundler, saying the former education commissioner had misled him about information requested by federal reviewers during an in-person presentation of the state's grant application.

Christie has since declared the Race to the Top saga over, but the state Legislature -- controlled by opposition Democrats — doesn't see it that way. Lawmakers have held two hearings so far, and what may be the most explosive session is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Thursday when Senate Majority Leader Barbara Buono (D-Middlesex) calls Schundler to testify after he was subpoenaed to appear. The Senate has also subpoenaed Wireless Generation, a consultant paid to assist in drafting the application.

"We want all the circumstances surrounding the application, the events leading up to it, the process, everything involved in the application and the aftermath. And when the governor pulled the rug out from everyone," Buono said today.

As Schundler begins testifying, Wireless Generation and state officials are scheduled to be in state Superior Court after Wireless today filed a motion to kill or delay the deadline on the Senate's subpoena.

Schundler said he will tell senators the changes by Christie's team in the final application made it impossible for the NJEA to sign on but made little substantive difference. Christie balked at Schundler's deal with the NJEA on merit pay for teachers and layoff rules.

(See SCHUNDLER, Page 9)



# V&V Committee Explores Report Filing For Staff



On October 12<sup>th</sup>, the Violence & Vandalism committee sponsored a workshop on V & V reporting procedures. Sasha Wolfe Esq, NJEA UniServ Representative, presented the workshop.

Mr. Wolfe began his presentation by explaining in fine detail the Paterson Board of Education's official policy Healthy Work Environment (Policy # 3351). Next, he discussed the legal requirements for the filing of New Jersey State Violence and Vandalism (V&V) reports. Later, he described the new agreement between the district and the PEA regarding the sharing of reports. This has eliminated the prior discrepancies in reporting figures for the two entities.

Mr. Wolfe took up a V&V report form and explained, line by line, how to fill out the report. He laid particular emphasis upon the following points:

- the importance of appending a description of the event
- who/what/and where the incident occurred
- whether a weapon was involved
- whether there was damage to personal or school property (vandalism)
- whether there was evidence of drugs or alcohol the nature of any threats made
- the responsibility of administrators vis-a vis report filing

In the process of explicating the form, Wolfe reviewed the definitions of assault, what the law provides for in the event of an assault upon school staff and what should be done in the event of a student-on-student attack.

There was a great deal of interchange between Mr. Wolfe and the attendees, many of whom asked questions based upon their own experiences or those of their colleagues. On leaving the room, many of the staff commented that they now had a much clearer understanding and deeper appreciation for the importance of V & V filing, and expressed their intention to share this knowledge with their building colleagues.

The next Violence and Vandalism Committee Workshop, with Anti-Bullying as the topic, is scheduled for December 7. Registration notices will be sent to all staff prior to the workshop.

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## Schundler

(Continued from Page 8)

Christie was livid, saying he had not been briefed on what Schundler was doing and the then-commissioner was not authorized to work out such an arrangement. Schundler, however, said he will testify Thursday that he briefed Richard Bagger, the governor's chief of staff, on nearly all of his discussions with the NJEA, except for the final terms on the rules governing teacher layoffs in which the state softened its public position.

Even so, Schundler said, Bagger was told about that before it was announced. Plus, Schundler said the deal was a good one for the state because it allowed the NJEA to endorse the application — something that could have been worth 15 additional points in the final judging. "It seemed like a no-brainer," Schundler said.

Christie became enraged after hearing radio host Jim Gearhart on New Jersey 101.5 FM bash the compromise as catering to the NJEA, Schundler said, adding that Christie phoned and said any notion of a compromise with the union would be "politically lethal" for him.

When Schundler told Christie that the state conceded on "almost nothing," Christie became "even madder."

**By Jessica Calefati and Josh Margolin/The Star-Ledger**

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## Cristie Wrong on Merit Pay

(Continued from Page 7)

Because students are not randomly assigned to classrooms, test scores are a poor measure of teachers' performance, said Jesse Rothstein, an associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley. It's common for principals to assign a group of unruly students to one teacher and a group of highly intelligent students to another. "VAMs are capturing which students you get, not just how effective you are at teaching them," Rothstein said. "With this type of evaluation, people will get merit pay because they get the right set of students."

# P.E.A. Files Unfair Labor Practice Charge Over Failure to Provide Assignments, Locations and Schedules in June

In response to the total failure of the District to comply with the terms of the contract for the second year in a row, the P.E.A. filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against the management in July before the Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC).

In its complaint, the Association contends that the District was required by contract to provide each staff member with their worksite, grade/assignment, and class schedule before the staff left at the end of the 2009-10 school year.

Unbelievably, the District first denied the charges, and then assured the Association and PERC that every staff member would have their schedule on September 1. P.E.A. continues to maintain that simply didn't happen.

Association President Pete Tirri exclaimed, "We know that didn't happen. We know there were staff members who found out their assignments on the first day of school. We know that some staff members didn't learn they didn't have a job until September 1. We know that there are some people who have yet to receive their class schedules, even in October."

Tirri continued "We have asked our Building Delegates to provide information about these three issues, and hope to continue to collect data even now. We urge our members to cooperate with these requests. If the results are particularly telling, we will be able to use them not only for the ULP, but we may discover further infractions as well".

## Christie's Dept. of Ed. "Holds Up" Staff Recalls

### Students Miss Two Months of Classes; Hundreds of Staff Remain Out of Work

A very long time ago, Beatle Ringo Starr sang "It Don't Come Easy", and that would seem to be the anthem for the Paterson Public Schools.

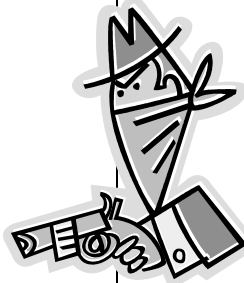
For the past six months, P.E.A. and its members have fought to save student programs and teaching positions in light of the Draconian cuts to the school budget propagated by the Christie administration. Designed as a stimulus package, the P.E.A. members fought for the approval of legislation that was specifically aimed at re-employing thousands of teachers nationwide who had lost their jobs as states reduced funding to schools. In Paterson, the EduJobs bill provided \$12.8 million to bring RIF'd teachers back.

Finally, after all of the hard work, phone calls, blast emails, demonstrations, etc. the U.S. Congress approved and President Obama signed the EduJobs bill into law. When adopted, the Christie administration waited until the very last day to file for New Jersey's share. He filed after some states had already received their allocations!

Now the state has received the EduJob funds, but Paterson is still waiting. The Christie administration took the funds and has, up until this moment, held on to the money basically holding an Evans audit request

against the school district for the delay in forwarding the funds.

Last year, with the finances of the District in chaos, Dr. Evans requested an audit of the District's finances. That request apparently languished in the SDOE for a very long time. The audit is now occurring in the District. The Christie DOE refuses to release the funds until the audit is completed.



In point of fact, **one has nothing to do with the other**. No matter what the audit shows, our students need art and music, guidance and librarians, SAC's and world language. P.E.A. expected that by now the money would be coming into the District. Dr. Evans announced at the October 20 Board meeting that he hoped the funds would be released by the end of the month.

Students in the District have missed art, music, world language and physical education classes taught by certified instructors. They were not able to get needed assistance from librarians, Student Assistance Coordinators, guidance counselors or other staff members, while we wait for the Christie Department of Education to put down their fiddle (while our schools burn). Everyone continues to wait for the promised funding, which will not return all RIF'd staff but will assist in healing the RIF's.

# P.E.A. COSE Looking Out for You!

## Workshops, Advocacy for Kids on the Agenda

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The P.E.A.'s Committee On Special Education will be providing the members with five professional development workshops this year. They are, \*Special Education Today, Round Table, October 25; \* How to Survive a Special Education Classroom, February 1, 2011; \*Response to Intervention, May 16, 2010, these will be held at The Brownstone.

The Committee will also hold two other roundtable discussions for developing unity and answering questions you might have about Special Ed, Paterson and the law. These will be held at the P.E.A. offices and are December 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

COSE is very concerned about special ed teachers and their assistants getting the contractual preps they are entitled to. Instructional Assistants shouldn't be used to cover preps for teachers. If that is happening, I.A.'s should be submitting a class coverage form for every prep they provide. If the classroom teacher is prepping a lesson for the I.A., the classroom teacher should submit a class coverage form also. Is this happening at your school? The committee would like to know how often this is happening.

Is your class size compliant with the law? Do you have an Instructional Assistant? Are there job vacancies for sped? Is your class being treated differently than the majority of the school? Are you eating in the classroom, not the cafeteria with others? Do you miss your prep and have to submit a class coverage form? Is your class being doubled up with other classes? Any other problems, please contact the committee at [cose@patersonea.org](mailto:cose@patersonea.org).

C.S.T. members, have you felt intimidated by the district to change an I.E.P. to suit the districts position of limited program availability for your students, especially when transitioning to high school? If so, please contact COSE at [cose@patersonea.org](mailto:cose@patersonea.org).

The more you tell us, the more we know, and the better we can assist you.

Debra Patsel,  
Chairperson, COSE

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## Professional Development Committee Report

The members of the Local Professional Development Committee would like to remind you that last year you were to have elected the **School Professional Development Committee**. The school level committee shall oversee the development of school level plans for professional development. If a member of the committee is no longer in your building, you need to elect a new committee member.

1. The committee shall consist of a principal or designee and at **least three** teachers who will be elected through the majority representative. (That is the P.E.A. The process is the same as if you were electing delegates.)
2. The plan shall include a description of school level and team-based learning in the school and will be based on identified school goals, and student needs.
3. The approved school level plans will become part of the District Professional Development Plan reviewed by the County Professional Board and the Local Board of Education.

This is your opportunity to develop activities and presentations for your professional development. The type of P.D. should be tailored to your school's needs based on a need's survey. Your meetings should be on going, team-based and collaborative. You are also writing your school's plan for submission in January. Also, if there are new staff members in your buildings they should create a PDP within 60 days of start of employment.

This years committee members are, Debra Patsel, Rutland Center; Christine Zimmermann, School 20 Alfreda Lawrence, School 14; Delores Shields, Schools 6 and 14.

Please contact us at, [dpatsel@paterson.k12.nj.us](mailto:dpatsel@paterson.k12.nj.us) if you have any questions or concerns.

**Paraprosdokian sentences:** A paraprosdokian (from Greek "para-", meaning "beyond" and "προσδοκία", meaning "expectation") is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to reframe or reinterpret the first part. It is frequently used for humorous or dramatic effect, sometimes producing an anticlimax. Some paraprosdokians not only change the meaning of an early phrase, but also play on the double meaning, creating a syllepsis .

- Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.
- Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
- Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.
- We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
- War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
- Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
- The early bird might get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- Evening news is where they begin with 'Good evening', and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.
- To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
- A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.
- How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?
- Some people are like Slinkies ... not really good for anything, but you can't help smiling when you see one tumble down the stairs.
- Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.
- I thought I wanted a career, turns out I just wanted pay checks.
- A bank is a place that will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.
- Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says "If an emergency, notify:" I put "DOCTOR".
- I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
- Why do Americans choose from just two people to run for president and 50 for Miss America ?
- A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
- The voices in my head may not be real, but they have some good ideas!
- Always borrow money from a pessimist. He won't expect it back.



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