

- **NJEA stops pension cuts.**
- **Mock Elections for students**
- **The BEA is online**
- **Welcome new members**

**INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:**

- BEA online 2**
- BEA Golf Outing 2**
- New Members 3**
- Logo Contest 3**
- Become a Rep 3**
- News Snippets 4**
- New Broker 4**

NewsBEAT

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

NEWSLETTER DATE

NJEA stops pension cuts

Legislature rejects Buono, Sweeney attacks on future employees

With the echoes of 35 statewide demonstrations by an estimated 12,000 NJEA members still reverberating through the State House on Friday, June 20, the Assembly and Senate budget committees passed a compromise bill that put an end to the very worst elements of a month-long attack on pensions launched by Sens. Barbara Buono (D) and Stephen Sweeney (D).

Just after 9 p.m. Friday, the Assembly Budget Committee, followed in short order by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, voted out A-2818, sponsored by Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts. It represented the compromise legislators needed to end the dispute.

The entire Legislature approved the measure on June 23.

Two key changes

For the record, NJEA opposed A-2818, which increases the retirement age for all future employees from 60 to 62, and raises the annual salary threshold for pension eligibility for all future employees to \$7,500 per year, adjusted annually by the CPI or 4 percent, whichever is less. In addition, members earning less than \$7,500, but more than \$500 (TPAF) or \$1,500 (PERS) will be eligible for the state's defined contribution pension plan.

"Neither of its proposed changes is necessary or appropriate," said NJEA President Joyce Powell.

Still, A-2818 fell far short of the three bills pushed by Buono and Sweeney – S-1962, S-1964, and S-1969 – which would have eliminated pensions for tens of thousands of part-time teachers

and school employees, and cut pensions for all future school employees.

3 offending bills 'dead'

"Those three bills are dead," said Powell. "Senator Stephen Sweeney's proposal to calculate pensions by using the highest 5 years' salary instead of the highest 3 is dead. Senator Barbara Buono's proposal for a minimum 30-hour per week requirement for participation in either the TPAF or PERS pension funds is dead. And Senator Buono's proposal to require employees to choose only one job for the purpose of calculating pensions is dead. We also protected the post-retirement medical benefits of part-time employees, which were threatened by both of Senator Buono's bills," Powell said.

The break in the crisis came fol-

Mock Elections for Students

The 2008 National Student/Parent Mock Election will be held on Oct. 30. Students from kindergarten through 12th grade will vote in their schools for the next president of the United States, the state's candidates for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and major national issues. To participate in the New Jersey Mock Election, a teacher or school official must return a school enrollment form. There is no charge to participate.

The enrollment form is available at www.njmockelection.org. The mock election allows teachers the flexibility to design the voter-education program that is right for their students. Links to free curriculum materials are offered on the New Jersey Mock Election website. NJEA is a supporter of the 2008 National Student/Parent Mock Election



NJEA News—Continued



Pension rally in June.

lowing an unprecedented showing of organizational muscle by NJEA members. On only three days' notice, an estimated 12,000 of them poured into the streets to protest at the offices of 30 state senators who either supported the original three bills, or who had failed to take a position on them.

"There is no question that NJEA turned the tide against these proposals, which would have reduced or eliminated the pensions of countless NJEA members in the future," Powell

said.

'A cruel charade'

"Let me be crystal clear," Powell added. "First, this battle was *never* about 'pension reform,' because there was nothing in any of those three bills – or in A-2818 – that addressed the documented abuses that continue to drain our pension systems every day. This was about pension *reduction*, and NJEA and its members won the battle to stop that effort in its tracks."

In her testimony Friday night, Powell told both budget com-

mittees that "our members did not create this problem. If you don't end pension abuse for good, this whole process will have been a cruel charade. You will have failed – once again – to address true pension reform or the abolition of abuses that are occurring every day."

"There is no question that NJEA turned the tide against these proposals, which would have reduced or eliminated the pensions of countless NJEA members in the future," Powell said.

BEA—NJEA WEBSITES

The BEA website is up and running. This year we hope to keep the web site current with important information for our members.

The web address is bea-online.org.

Logging into njea.org just got easier

Can't find your NJEA membership card or don't remember your PIN? You can still log into njea.org! Members can now log in to Members Only on njea.org using your e-mail address OR PIN, and your password (the last four digits of your Social Security number, unless you've changed it.)

Of course you must have your current e-mail address on file with NJEA in order to use it to log in. If you need to add or update your e-mail address on your profile page – simply log in using your PIN and click the "edit" button on your profile page to do so. While you're there, why not sign up for NJEA's e-newsletters? You'll receive periodic e-mail updates from NJEA on member benefits, professional development, legislative issues, or new member

BEA Golf Outing

On June 24, 2008, the BEA hosted its annual golf outing. The golf outing raises money for the BEA/Eleanor Arthur Scholarship Fund. This year, forty golfers participated in the event.



The golfers included teachers, administrators, community members, friends of the association, and alumni. After the golfing, the golfers retired to The Chandelier for music and dinner.

Each year the outing grows. 2008 was our

largest group to date. The golf outing is a great way to raise money and unwind at the end of the year.

This year, the fund provided \$1,000.00 scholarships for five deserving BHS seniors.

**BEA Annual Golf Outing
A Great Success!!!**

For New Members

The BEA welcomes our new members. Our Association is a community of teachers and secretaries. We extend a heartfelt welcome to our new community members. The Association is here to help answer questions, to assist in professional support, and to address any misunderstandings between the administration and teachers. Each new member should become familiar with the building reps for each school building. The Association supports non-tenured teachers with the same vigor as we support tenure teachers.

Some information for new teachers:

- Any questions about health coverage can be answered by IMAC. IMAC is our health care

representative. Our representative is Karen Waters and she may be reached at 973-450-9800.

- The contract outlines any questions concerning working conditions.
- The executive committee is comprised of seven members: Anthony Salese, president; Donna Richiardi, vice president; Michele Monica, treasurer; Ann Marie Perna, secretary; James Russomanno, parliamentarian; Michael Popovich, Middle School liaison; Kathy Sheridan, 12 month liaison.

- We have a new grievance committee. The committee is comprised of the following: Danielle DiGori, School # 10; Janis Ferraro, Special Services; Christine Hurta, High School. Please feel free to contact any of the executive committee members or any members of the grievance committee if you have any questions. Please note: *Questions do not translate to grievances!!* The Association is here to assist.

“Our association is a community of teachers and secretaries.”
 “The Association is here to assist and help”

Become A Representative

Please consider becoming an association representative. It is imperative that the association information is disseminated among staff members. The BEST way to provide information is through colleagues. The association meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at The Chandelier, where a buffet is provided for representatives. The Chandelier is

located at 340 Franklin Ave., Belleville and the meetings begin at 3:30 PM.

The Association meetings provide important information concerning issues affecting public education as well as addressing issues affecting the membership of the local. The Association meetings provide a forum for issues that affect all

of us and our profession.

Each school is allowed one representative for every ten members. Please consider joining the representative council to address the concerns of your school and provide important information to your colleagues.

Logo Ideas

The BEA is considering instituting a logo for our association. The logo text may begin with the letters BEA, but using our association letters in NOT mandatory. The logo could included a symbol, picture or drawing that depicts the sentiment of the text or represents the district in some way.

All members are invited to submit their ideas to the executive committee by October,

We are also asking that some members volunteer to judge the entries and submit the best five to the membership for a vote. Thank you in advance for your interest.

Some logo slogans of other associations from around the state are as follows:

- “United for our children” Asbury Park
- “MTEA: A Great Organization with a Great Future” Monroe Township

- “Standing Strong Together for Education” West Windsor/ Plainfield
- “Succeeding in Education Together” Wykoff

Examples of BEA:

- **Believing in Excellence and Achievement** for all children

*Believing in
 Education &
 Achievement*

Belleville Education Association

480 Union Avenue Phone: 973-450-0788
Belleville, NJ 07109 Fax: 973-450-9190

The Belleville Education Association is comprised of dedicated teachers and secretaries who believe education is the nation's first and most important priority. These professionals work diligently to ensure that all Belleville's children achieve excellence. As a teacher/secretary advocacy group, the BEA is committed to promoting academic excellence, professional recognition, and community liaisons.

New Broker

As you well know, the BOE voted to change the insurance broker. Our new broker is IMAC.

Please contact - Karen Waters - office phone is 973-450-9800; fax number 973-450-9892.

Important note:

THE INSURANCE COVERAGE DID NOT CHANGE.

**We're on the web.
Www.bea-online.org**

News Snippets

- Our beloved, Jackie DeBenedetto passed away this summer. Jackie was a very special person and she will be missed greatly. We extend our sympathies to the DeBenedetto family.
- The BEA – Eleanor Arthur Scholarship will be passed on to the newly retired PR&R Chairperson, MaryAnn Zizza. Ms. Zizza has graciously accepted the responsibilities of the scholarship fund. Thank you MaryAnn. Anyone who would like to make a donation to the fund should send their donation to our treasurer Michele Monica, who will then forward the money to Ms. Zizza.
- Dr. Kliszus has accepted a position with the Hackensack school district. He will be leaving us in September.
- The BEA wishes Dr. Kliszus good luck in all his future endeavors.
- The Jets now have Brett Farve. Can you say Super Bowl?
- Book your room for the NJEA convention early.
- The following companies offer teacher discounts: Barnes & Noble, Staples; Michael's Craft Store; Office Max.
- Happy New Year! Enjoy the little things.



Mr. Orrieri at the golf outing!