



## President's Message

Dear colleagues:

This issue's President's message is a vitally important one. I ask that every member read this message and take **immediate** action.

Every one of the employees covered under our collective bargaining agreement has paid into the pension system since the first moment they began their career as a public employee.

Unfortunately, in the last 15 years, NJ has provided little or no funding to public employee pension funds. In 2011, Governor Christie and the legislature passed Chapter 78 which increased our pension contributions and reduced our benefits. But it also gave us a **CONTRACTUAL RIGHT** to the state pension contribution.

Since 2011, New Jersey school employees have contributed **BILLIONS OF DOLLARS** to their pensions, but Governor Christie **CONTINUES TO VIOLATE THE VERY LAW THAT HE SIGNED!**

The Pension systems are in dire condition: This is a crisis situation and if no action is taken, the pensions could run out of money as soon as 2027. This situation has been building for many years, and it is not our fault as we have always paid our pensions.

### HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT?

The pension crisis was caused by many complicated factors over a 20-year period, but the fundamental problem has always been the state's failure to make regular full payments. You can get more information, here: <http://www.njea.org/njea-media/pdf/pensionfacts.pdf>

THERE ARE NO EASY SOLUTIONS

This won't be an easy fight because it's not an easy problem to solve. Our job is to make it ***harder for legislators to break the law than to obey the law***. They have to know that our position is clear: Full funding. No delays, no excuses, no exceptions.

### WHAT IS NJEA'S STRATEGY?

While many members are justifiably very angry with Gov. Christie, we must accept that he refuses to be a leader and fix this situation. In order to win, our focus must be with legislators. We are waiting for the Supreme Court ruling and we believe we have a strong case, but no matter what the court does, it will be up to legislators to follow through and fund our pensions. The Governor cannot be counted upon to follow the law. It is our job to insist that our legislators do so.

### EVERY MEMBER NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED

Take out your phone right now and text PENSION to 738674. Go to [fundnjpension.org](http://fundnjpension.org) right now and sign up to be a pension activist. If you cannot access the website, ask your AR for a paper pledge card. Everyone must attend as many meetings, lobby days and other actions as possible.

You can get more information and more ways to get involved at [fundpension.org](http://fundpension.org). You can also contact me to get postcards and notecards, or to learn how to join the social media campaign on Twitter or Facebook.

The Governor will not agree to follow the law, but we **MUST** force our legislators to do so.

Lee Ann

(Portions of this text were taken from [fundpension.org](http://fundpension.org))



## Vice President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

At our General Membership meeting in March, we elected Jeri Asaro and Sue Berardinelli to the positions of Treasurer and Secretary. We are indeed fortunate to have such dedicated members serving in these vital roles. I am also grateful to our PTEA Committee Chairs and Association Representatives from each building. If you have not yet been involved in the work of your association, perhaps this is the time for you to roll up your sleeves and join us as we advocate for the terms and conditions in which our members work and our students learn. Every voice is important and there is a role for you to play. Please consider being an AR or serving on a committee. Lee Ann has asked for Pension Activists from each building. If you are a veteran staff member, we especially need your support to keep us strong. Please reach out to an officer or member of the Rep Council to find out how you can make a difference in your union.

*Ann Marie*

## Morris County Mall Project

The outstanding work of Pequannock students was on display at Rockaway Mall as we once again participated in the annual MCCEA Mall Project. Thank you to Pequannock's coordinator, Janet Drashinsky (SJG), all staff who contributed student work and the following members for giving up part of a Sunday to either set up or take down the display: Eileen Ciavarella (SJG), Rhett Eveland (PTHS), Ann Marie Finnen (SJG), Susan Flood (PV), Karen Freedgood (HV), Lillian Keating (PV), Jessica Murin (SJG), Eileen Skula (NB), Leslie Ulrich (NB), Susan Weinman (NB) and many family members who also assisted!



Congratulations to Hillview Fifth Grader Michal Magiera (pictured below with Hillview teachers Michele Ruggiero and Karen Freedgood) for being one of the winners of the county poster contest. The theme this year was "I have pride in my school . . ." In addition to winning a monetary prize, Michal's artwork will appear in the MCCEA 2015-2016 School Year Calendar as well as on notecards.



Photo by Joe Phalon



## Membership Update Sally Belmont (SJG)

Are you receiving your monthly NJEA magazine, the Morris County Line and Convention information? If not, NJEA does not have your current address information. Please sign in on the NJEA .com website with your Pin# (the number printed on your NJEA card) and your password (last 4 digit of your social security #, unless you have changed it). Click on "My Profile", and update your information. Contact me at [sallybelmont@yahoo.com](mailto:sallybelmont@yahoo.com) if you need help.

**Retiring?** Consider continuing your membership by joining the NJREA. All the benefits you have enjoyed are continued into retirement, and NJREA advocates for pension, medical, and legislative issues that affect retired school employees. Retirees can receive a personalized membership application by mailing your information to:

New Jersey Retirees' Education Association  
Attn: Membership Division  
180 West State Street  
PO Box 1211  
Trenton, NJ 08607-1211  
(609) 599-4561 ext.4123

## PEQUANNOCK STREET FAIR Sunday, June 14, 10am-5pm

The PTEA will man a table at this year's Street Fair. We will be greeting community members, distributing literature and giveaways, and conducting a raffle to support our Philanthropic Fund. Please consider signing up for an hour or two, and contact your AR or an officer if you can help us out.

## PTEA Scholarships

On May 13, your Association will present \$5700 in scholarships to graduating PTHS seniors. This amount is increased from previous years, and includes awards to children of PTEA members as well as children of non-members. Thank you to our Scholarship Committee – Jeri Asaro (PV), Keith Brady (PTHS), Lee Ann Brensinger (PTHS), and Ann Marie Finnen (SJG) who reviewed over 30 applications. The process was blind, and we believe that truly deserving applicants have been selected. Of course this would not be possible without the generosity of our members. Thank you to all who donated this year, and supported our fundraisers. Our first Baked Potato Night (pictured below) was a great success. Thanks to our members, and donations from Shop Rite of Lincoln Park and BJ's of Riverdale, we raised over \$1200!



## PRIDE

Once again this Spring, the PTEA will sponsor two Little League teams, FBLA's Intergenerational Prom and the Run for Marge. Contact PRIDE Chair, Susan Flood (PV) if you'd like to help out at an event, or if you have an idea for a way to partner with the Pequannock community.





## Congratulations to the PTEA's 2015 Friends of Education!



Pictured from left to right are PTEA Vice President Ann Marie Finnen, Veronica Hydock, MCCEA President Laurie Schorno, Suzanne Wintemberg, Ed Leonard, Keri Anne Cianciotto, Kristie Deitch and PTEA President Lee Ann Brensinger.

## NJWELL

As you may have read in the recent email from the Board Office, both PTEA members enrolled in our health insurance plan and their covered spouse/partner can each earn \$100 - \$200 in NJWELL prepaid cards by participating in a biometric health screening, completing an online Health Assessment and participating in additional activities. To complete your online Health Assessment (and find out how to earn NJWELL points for additional activities), please visit [shbp.horizonblue.com/health-wellness/njwell](http://shbp.horizonblue.com/health-wellness/njwell). If you received a gift card last year under this promotion, you are eligible for an additional one this year.

## Upcoming Dates

**April 28** – “PDP’s and You” workshop  
Zeris Inn, Mountain Lakes

**May 5** – Pension Action Meeting  
Zeris Inn, Mountain Lakes

**May 13** – Rep Council meeting at HV

**May 19** – ESP Workshop at Zeris  
“De-Escalation Techniques”

**May 27** – MCCEA Retirement Dinner  
Meadow Wood Manor, Mountain Lakes

**June 14** – Pequannock Street Fair  
Help out at PTEA table, or stop by and say hi