



SUNLIGHT
POLICY CENTER
— OF NEW JERSEY —

ISSUE UPDATE

NJEA LEADERSHIP'S SCHEME TO HIDE THE FACTS FROM TEACHERS

**BECAUSE WHEN TEACHERS LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT
EXCESSIVE COMPENSATION AND POLITICAL SPENDING,
MANY CHOOSE TO LEAVE THE NJEA**

December 11, 2023

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Because When Teachers Learn the Facts About Excessive Compensation and Political Spending, Many Choose to Leave the NJEA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"[The Wayne Education Association president] certifies that **since the Sunlight Policy Center email campaign began ... far fewer members have chosen to enroll in the Association, and the net result has been a decline in membership."**

-- New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission, September 28, 2023

The Wayne Education Association (WEA) president stated unequivocally that the NJEA is losing members because the Sunlight Policy Center of New Jersey's digital ad and email campaign is informing teachers of the facts about how their dues are being spent. Of course, Wayne is NJEA President Sean Spiller's home district, so NJEA leadership is paying very close attention.

Fewer members means less dues revenues -- and less money for NJEA leadership's compensation and political spending. That's why NJEA leadership desperately wants to keep teachers in the dark about leadership's excessive and wasteful political spending and their one-percenter compensation. All of this is paid for by New Jersey teachers' highest-in-the-nation regular dues, which were increased yet again this September. So NJEA leadership has a scheme to hide these facts from teachers.

That's why the NJEA just unveiled its new "Member Protection Center" on the NJEA website, which is aimed squarely at Sunlight's campaign. The Member Protection Center is an attempt to discredit Sunlight in the hope that teachers will ignore the indisputable facts we present.

That's why the NJEA is asking the state Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to force the Wayne School District to block Sunlight's campaign from reaching teachers in Wayne. If PERC orders the censoring of teachers' emails in Wayne, the NJEA will no doubt pursue its own statewide campaign to have other school districts censor teachers' emails.

That's why NJEA has hidden the highest-in-the-nation compensation for NJEA leadership, including Ed Richardson's astounding \$9.3 million as a NJEA exec.

And that's why NJEA leadership has hidden the existence of the NJEA's main vehicle for political spending: its Super PAC, Garden State Forward. Garden State Forward has spent over \$68 million of teachers' regular dues since its founding in 2013, yet there is no mention of Garden State Forward in the NJEA's main interfaces with teachers. Not

on the NJEA website; not in the NJEA's monthly magazine, *NJEA Review*; not in the Delegate Assembly minutes; not in the annual budget summaries. Nowhere. This has allowed NJEA leadership to hide a great deal of questionable political spending from the very teachers who pay for it. Very few, if any, teachers know about the NJEA wasting \$5.4 million on Trump-supporting Fran Grenier in his futile bid to unseat Senate President Steve Sweeney. Very few, if any, know about the millions of funding for NJEA President Spiller's personal political career. This is exactly as intended.

When teachers learn the facts about how NJEA leadership spends their dues, many are choosing to stop paying dues. That's why NJEA leadership is desperate to block Sunlight's emails. But these self-serving actions don't benefit teachers, who deserve to know the facts, they benefit NJEA leadership.

NJEA LEADERSHIP'S SCHEME TO HIDE THE FACTS FROM TEACHERS

1. PERC: Petitioning a State Agency to Censor Teachers' Emails

Earlier this year, the [New Jersey Monitor](#) reported that the Wayne Education Association (WEA) petitioned the state Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to force the Wayne School District to block Sunlight's digital ad and email campaign. Wayne is NJEA President Sean Spiller's home school district, so NJEA leadership is paying very close attention and supporting the WEA with NJEA lawyers.

WEA is asking PERC to order the Wayne School District to stop Sunlight's emails from reaching teachers because teachers were learning facts they didn't know and asking if they were true. More importantly, as PERC's Summary Judgment [ruling](#) in the case states:

"[The WEA president] certifies that since the SPC email campaign began ... far fewer members have chosen to enroll in the Association, and the net result has been a decline in membership."

In other words, having learned the facts from Sunlight, teachers were choosing to stop paying dues and leave the WEA and NJEA. So the NJEA wants PERC to help "protect" teachers from these facts because it fears losing members and the dues revenues that paid for their excessive compensation and political spending.

The PERC action makes clear that the NJEA is working hard to keep teachers in the dark about how their dues are spent. The NJEA is afraid that if teachers learn the facts, they will decide they have better things to do with the \$1,500 they pay to the NJEA every year. If PERC accedes to the NJEA's wishes, NJEA leadership will no doubt engage in their own campaign to force other school districts to censor teachers' emails.

2. Member Protection Center: "Protects" Teachers from Learning the Facts

The same is true for the NJEA's recently unveiled "[Member Protection Center](#)." on its website. As shown in Appendix A, the Member Protection Center is squarely aimed at Sunlight's digital ad and email campaign. Note, however, that the NJEA never addresses any of the facts we present. They cannot refute any of our facts because they are *facts*. Instead, the NJEA attacks the messenger, Sunlight, in the hope that teachers will ignore the facts we present.

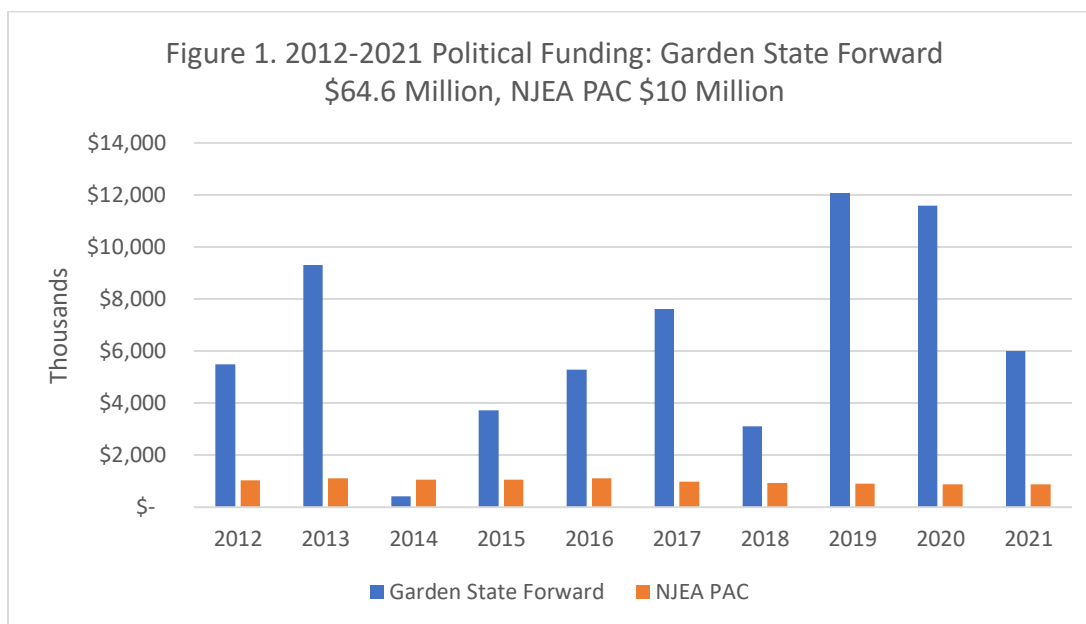
The Member Protection Center seeks to protect NJEA leadership, not teachers.

3. NJEA Hides \$68 Million of Political Spending by Garden State Forward

Founded in 2013 by the NJEA, Garden State Forward is a Super PAC that can spend unlimited amounts of money in support of political candidates. The expenditures must be independent of the candidates and their political parties. Because there are no spending limits, Garden State Forward has become the NJEA's primary vehicle for political spending, eclipsing the NJEA's traditional PAC, NJEA PAC.

Importantly, unlike NJEA PAC, Garden State Forward is funded by teachers' regular dues, which are withheld from every paycheck. This means that NJEA leadership can draw from a \$135 million pool to spend unlimited amounts in support the NJEA's favored candidates.

And spend they have. As shown in Figure 1, for the decade 2012-2021, the NJEA allocated \$64.6 million to Garden State Forward compared to \$10 million in funding for NJEA PAC. The numbers speak for themselves. Garden State Forward is by far the main vehicle for NJEA political spending.



* Tax years; tax year 2012 corresponds to NJEA FY2013. Source: NJEA IRS Forms 990, 2012-21.

In addition, from Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) filings we know that Garden State Forward spent \$653,380 in 2022 and \$3,098,083 in 2023. While this does not account for the total amount allocated by the NJEA to Garden State Forward, it does provide a measure of Garden State Forward's more recent spending. Adding these amounts to the \$64.6 million allocated from 2012-2021, we estimate that Garden State Forward has spent a total of at least \$68.4 million – all funded by teachers' regular dues.

That's \$68.4 million reasons why NJEA leadership does not want teachers to know about Garden State Forward.

Search of NJEA Website: No Results for “Garden State Forward.” Searching the NJEA's website for the words “Garden State Forward” results in this [response](#):

Sorry, but nothing matched your search terms. Please try again with different keywords.

Either the search function is flawed or the term “Garden State Forward” does not exist on the NJEA website. The search function appears to work perfectly well for the term “NJEA PAC” (see below). We will infer that Garden State Forward is not mentioned anywhere on the website.

Budgets and Delegate Assembly Minutes in *NJEA Review*: No Mention of Garden State Forward. Sunlight has studied both the NJEA's monthly magazines for teachers, *NJEA Review* and the now-defunct *NJEA Reporter*, going back decades. We have read every edition of *NJEA Review* since 2013, including all the Delegate Assembly minutes and annual budget summaries. There is no mention of Garden State Forward in either the budgets or the minutes.

The budget summaries allow teachers to see what the NJEA is spending their dues on but there has never been an expenditure line-item for Garden State Forward. Rather, the NJEA's spending on Garden State Forward is listed as “Organizational Projects,” as seen in the most recent budget summary in Appendix B. A teacher would never know that this represents Garden State Forward spending. The only reason Sunlight knows is that the numbers for Organizational Projects matches exactly the numbers for Garden State Forward in the NJEA IRS Form 990s. The vast majority of teachers will never see a NJEA IRS Form 990.

Likewise, Sunlight examined Delegate Assembly (DA) minutes in *NJEA Review* for every year since 2013 and found no mention of Garden State Forward by name. For example, the DA minutes for January 4, 2020, published online and in *NJEA Review*, a \$25 million budget transfer to Garden State Forward is described as to “strategic organizing and organizational projects accounts.” The same misleading language as in the summary budgets mentioned above.

Similarly, in the DA minutes of January 20, 2018, the ultimately explosive [revelation](#) that the NJEA was secretly funding the pro-Murphy, dark-money Super PAC New

Direction New Jersey was described as an “independent expenditure issue advocacy effort to support the governor’s policy agenda.” That money was transferred to Garden State Forward.

Garden State Forward Social Media: No Posts Since 2017. There is a Garden State Forward Facebook [page](#), but a teacher would have to know of Garden State Forward and its link to the NJEA to look for it. As we have seen, she won’t get that from the NJEA. But even if she did know to look for it, she would find that nothing has been posted to the Facebook page *in over six years*. Clearly, it is not an active Facebook page and is not used by the NJEA to publicize Garden State Forward or any of its activities.

The same is true for the Garden State Forward X (Twitter) [page](#): nothing has been posted *in over six years*. This account is clearly not being used to publicize Garden State Forward or its activities either.

These are effectively dead social media sites that provide no information to teachers.

Garden State Forward Helps Hide Controversial Political Spending. The NJEA frequently uses Garden State Forward to fund “dark-money” Super PACs that do not have to disclose their donors. This makes it difficult to trace the NJEA’s political spending, no doubt as intended.

This also makes Garden State Forward the ideal vehicle for pursuing more controversial political spending that the NJEA would prefer to hide from teachers.

Case #1: Garden State Forward Wastes \$5.4 Million Against Steve Sweeney.

The perfect case-in-point is Garden State Forward’s support for Trump-supporting Republican Fran Grenier in Legislative District 3 (LD3) in 2017. Grenier’s opponent was then-Senate President, Democrat Sen. Steve Sweeney. The NJEA was out for revenge against Sweeney because he blocked a NJEA-backed constitutional amendment. NJEA PAC endorsed Grenier, which was reported to teachers in *NJEA Review*, but there was no mention of Garden State Forward or the amount spent. No teacher could have known that regular dues were being used to support him.

In the end, ELEC [estimated](#) that Garden State Forward spent \$5.4 million on Grenier, who proceeded to lose by 18% -- Sweeney’s largest margin of victory ever. The NJEA’s massive spending helped make the LD3 contest the [most expensive state legislative race in US history](#). That was a colossal waste of teachers’ dues -- unknown to the vast majority of teachers who paid for it.

Case #2: Millions of Regular Dues for Sean Spiller’s Personal Political

Career. Another controversial use of teachers’ dues is Garden State Forward’s funding dark-money Super PAC, Protecting Our Democracy, of which NJEA President Spiller is chairman. Protecting Our Democracy is [widely seen](#) as a platform for Spiller’s post-NJEA political career. As has so often been the case in Spiller’s personal political career, the conflict of interest is blatant and manifest.

The [New Jersey Globe](#) reported that Protecting Our Democracy launched a “substantial seven-figure” — that is, millions of dollars — ad campaign in support of Spiller, “a possible candidate for governor.” The NJEA is Protecting Our Democracy’s “founding donor.” Given the million-dollar scale of the effort, the NJEA is almost certainly using Garden State Forward as the funding vehicle.

Once again, we used the search function on the NJEA website for “Protecting Our Democracy.” There were no results. [Nothing](#).

In Contrast to Garden State Forward, NJEA PAC Is a Model of Transparency. On the other hand, the NJEA’s traditional political action committee, NJEA PAC, is a model of transparency. So we know that NJEA leadership knows what transparency looks like.

As a traditional PAC, NJEA PAC can contribute directly to candidates’ campaigns and to political parties, but these contributions are limited in amount, highly regulated, and disclosed in detail to the public. Importantly, NJEA PAC is funded by a separate dues stream that teachers must opt into, which has resulted in far less funding for NJEA PAC.

The NJEA has been highly transparent about NJEA PAC. Appendix C provides a recent article in the October, 2023 edition of *NJEA Review*, which describes exactly how the endorsement process works. Screening committees for each legislative district review completed candidate questionnaires, examine candidates’ voting records, evaluate presentations by the candidates, and then make recommendations to the NJEA PAC Operating Committee. The 125-person Operating Committee includes officers, staff and members from every membership category and determines which candidates will be endorsed. As such, it can validly be said to represent the “judgment of your fellow NJEA members.” The NJEA then provides teachers with a full list of endorsed candidates on the website and in *NJEA Review*.

The transparency about NJEA PAC is underscored by using the search function on the NJEA website. A search for “NJEA PAC” generates [seven pages](#) of results.

NJEA Misleads Members into Thinking Political Spending is Limited to NJEA PAC. Importantly, the explanation makes clear that “NJEA PAC depends on your voluntary contribution.” In other words, members must opt into NJEA PAC contributions. So when a teacher sees on the NJEA website a list of the “[Top Ten Excuses for not Giving to NJEA PAC](#),” one of them is “I already pay dues” — that is, regular, annual dues. In response, the NJEA states unequivocally:

By law, dues money cannot be used for partisan political campaigns.

So a teacher will come away from this education in NJEA political spending thinking that NJEA PAC represents the sum total of the NJEA political spending. If that teacher wants to support the NJEA’s political efforts, she can voluntarily opt into paying NJEA PAC dues. That’s it.

But this response is misleading in the extreme. A teacher would naturally assume that “partisan political campaigns” would encompass all election campaign spending, but it doesn’t. It does not include independent expenditures, which must be made independently of candidate campaigns and political parties, so they are not technically “partisan.” As such, it does not include the \$68 million of their regular dues spent by Garden State Forward. The aim here is to obscure not clarify.

And it has worked: one of the most common comments by teachers on Sunlight’s Facebook page is the erroneous claim that teachers’ regular dues do not fund political activities – because they have been led to believe that NJEA PAC is the NJEA’s sole vehicle for political spending. They have no idea that Garden State Forward exists, let alone that they are paying for it.

4. Non-disclosure about NJEA Leadership's One-Percenter Compensation

As acknowledged in the PERC pleading (mentioned above), teachers have been kept in the dark about the [one-percenter pay](#) for NJEA leadership. Sunlight has [documented](#) how NJEA leadership pays themselves more than any other teachers union by far, and how, for example, former- executive director Ed Richardson amassed an astounding \$9.3 million over his career. All of this was paid for by teachers, who average \$70,000 a year in salary. No wonder NJEA leadership wants to keep this quiet.

And keep it quiet, they do. Sunlight has found no disclosure whatsoever of executive compensation in any of the NJEA's main interfaces with teachers: the monthly magazines, the summary budgets, and the Delegate Assembly minutes. We searched the NJEA's website for stories on "compensation" and "executive compensation" and found nothing. Information about executive compensation can only be found in the NJEA's IRS Forms 990, which the vast majority of teachers will never see.

If not for Sunlight's campaign, teachers would not know the facts about NJEA leadership's one-percenter compensation, which is precisely why NJEA leadership wants to censor our efforts.

CONCLUSION

As evidenced by the rather modest flow of NJEA PAC dues depicted in Figure 1, when given the choice, teachers prefer not to fund political spending. So the hyper-political NJEA leadership has found it highly expedient to tap into the \$135 million of regular, annual dues at their disposal, especially when the resulting political spending can be hidden from teachers. That’s why Garden State Forward has become the NJEA’s primary vehicle for political spending.

And when NJEA leadership uses teachers' regular dues to make themselves multi-millionaires, self-preservation dictates that it's wise to keep that hidden from teachers, too.

As we have seen, when teachers learn these facts, many choose to stop paying for this behavior and keep their \$1,500 a year for themselves. So NJEA leadership is working hard to keep teachers in the dark about these facts by trying to censor their emails and creating a Member "Protection" Center. All for the benefit of NJEA leadership, not teachers.

APPENDIX A



Sunlight Policy Center of New Jersey



The Sunlight Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization that claims to be a non-partisan research center focused on “advocating for policy solutions that put New Jersey back on the path to future prosperity.” Since 2019, they have published a series of “policy papers” and blog posts attacking NJEA, denigrating our elected leadership and making poorly-sourced claims about our finances and organizing practices. A recent publication took aim at our membership dues.

Who is Sunlight Policy Center of New Jersey

SPCNJ was founded by Mike Lilley, a millionaire from Rumson, NJ who previously worked as the Executive Director of Better Education for Kids NJ, also known as B4K, a New Jersey based education reform organization backed by hedge fund billionaires advocating for private school vouchers. Prior to this work, Lilley was an “Adjunct Scholar” for the American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank funded by the Koch Brothers, advocating for reducing consumer protections, denying climate change, and eliminating social safety nets. SPCNJ’s Board of Trustees include hedge fund millionaires and education reform advocates.

Why are they talking about NJEA’s membership dues?

Great question! Sunlight Policy Center is a political advocacy organization with an anti-union agenda. Their billionaire backers would love nothing more than to reduce the ranks of union membership in New Jersey, because we are the only thing standing between them and their efforts to privatize public education. NJEA members recognize that their union membership is more than a simple purchase of services. Collectively, NJEA members stand together to advocate for our profession and to keep New Jersey’s public schools the best in the nation, and the leaders and staff of NJEA are proud to stand by their side.

What should I do?

Take a closer look. Organizations that seek to undermine union membership usually have financial motives, and SPCNJ is no exception. Report suspicious activity related to your membership using the Membership Protection Center. Educate yourself and your colleagues. And remember, your freedom to stand up for yourself and public education is on the line.

From the NJEA Membership Protection Center • njea.org/mpc

APPENDIX B

This budget summary was presented in the September, 2023 *NJEA Review* magazine: No line-item for Garden State Forward, but see “ORGANIZATIONAL PROJ 0471” for GSF spending.

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES					BUDGET SUMMARY				
	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance		2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
GOVERNANCE					PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Executive Committee 0400	\$ 2,967,241	3,264,000	3,178,200	-2.63%	Prof Develop Office 1000	3,473,509	3,574,400	3,271,800	-8.47%
Delegate Assembly 0410	294,391	285,500	317,500	11.21%	PD Learning 1005	57,832	175,000	368,000	110.29%
Elections 0430	392,885	341,000	352,000	3.23%	PD Capacity Bldg 1010	126,841	240,000	0	-100.00%
Officers 0440	1,975,757	2,030,700	1,976,100	-2.69%	Training Consultants 1075	280,734	323,000	332,500	2.94%
Committees 1400	118,578	469,900	389,600	-17.09%	ACCESS Program 1080	508,961	578,800	463,000	-20.01%
TOTAL	5,748,851	6,391,100	6,213,400	-2.78%	Teacher Leader Academy 1085	103,032	167,500	167,500	0.00%
					Prof Development Conf 1097	205,269	260,000	245,000	-5.77%
					TOTAL	4,756,178	5,318,700	4,847,800	-8.85%
LEGAL SERVICES PROG 0465					RESEARCH & ECONOMIC SERVICES				
Organizational Activities 0470	2,157,276	3,650,000	3,307,000	-9.40%	Research Office 1100	6,081,603	5,788,000	5,612,700	-3.03%
Human/Civil Rights and Equity 0450	192,755	530,000	605,000	14.15%	Research Services 1105	147,357	335,500	219,500	-34.58%
Equity Alliance Conference 0455	132,110	260,000	260,000	0.00%	Member Benefits 1110	328,115	481,000	456,000	-5.20%
TOTAL	2,482,141	4,440,000	4,172,000	-6.04%	Research Conference 1115	15,459	175,000	160,000	-8.57%
					Research Library 1120	24,000	15,500	25,500	64.52%
					TOTAL	6,596,533	6,795,000	6,473,700	-4.73%
ORGANIZATIONAL PROJ 0471					UNISERV FIELD				
	6,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	0.00%	Uniserv Field Directors 1200	3,550,964	3,780,500	3,590,600	-5.02%
COMMUNICATIONS					Uniserv - South 1201				
Communications Office 0600	4,794,335	5,141,800	4,871,300	-5.26%		18,196	11,000	13,700	24.55%
Other Services 0605	44,733	69,000	223,500	223.91%	Uniserv - Central 1202	9,929	12,000	14,200	18.33%
Consultants 0615	158,575	206,400	170,400	-17.44%	Uniserv - Northwest 1203	9,566	15,300	16,900	10.46%
Media Relations 0620	91,284	135,000	0	-100.00%	Uniserv - Northeast 1204	9,839	17,300	18,800	8.67%
Public Relations 0630	13,928	39,000	0	-100.00%	Uniserv Field Program 1205	288,094	916,600	521,100	-43.15%
Review 0640	1,439,022	1,399,000	1,662,000	18.80%	Field Consultants 1240	2,731,020	2,590,600	2,300,000	-11.22%
Communications Conference 0680	0	70,000	100,000	42.86%	Strengthening Locals 1250	269,369	1,090,000	1,030,000	-5.50%
TOTAL	6,541,876	7,000,200	7,027,200	-0.47%	Higher Education 1260	56,634	109,000	111,300	2.11%
					Leadership Operations 1265	597,631	1,220,000	820,000	-32.79%
					TOTAL	7,537,241	9,762,300	8,436,600	-13.58%
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS					CONVENTIONS				
Gov Relations Office 0700	3,857,834	4,552,500	4,300,300	-5.54%	NJEA 1095	1,777,829	2,468,100	2,469,100	0.04%
Legislative Field Proj 0720	477,399	879,000	892,000	1.48%	NEA 0475	1,186,573	1,187,000	1,232,000	3.79%
Legislative Publications 0730	23,995	31,000	33,000	6.45%	TOTAL	2,964,402	3,655,100	3,701,100	1.26%
Consultants 0740	70,255	107,800	78,800	-26.90%	ORGANIZATIONAL MGMT 0565				
TOTAL	4,429,483	5,570,300	5,304,100	-4.78%		7,539,787	8,330,400	8,421,600	1.09%
UNISERV PROGRAM REGIONAL OFFICES					MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZING				
Regional Offices 0899	24,321,467	23,480,300	22,339,700	-4.86%	Membership Organizing 0532	0	345,000	240,000	-30.43%
01 Gallaway 0800	166,621	176,100	184,100	4.54%	Preservice 0535	0	98,000	94,700	-3.37%
02 Mullica Hill 0805	200,155	201,900	204,600	1.34%	TOTAL	0	443,000	334,700	-24.45%
03 Mt Laurel 0810	192,856	251,200	235,400	-6.29%	ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL				
05 Morristown 0815	58,538	37,600	29,100	-22.61%	Executive Office 0435	4,706,214	4,909,300	4,842,000	-1.37%
07 Toms River 0820	118,718	133,600	131,600	-1.50%	Administration 0440	1,481,190	1,607,000	1,574,000	-2.05%
08 Trenton 0823	10,003	14,300	14,300	0.00%	Personnel 0480	75,128	175,000	163,500	-6.57%
09 Wall Twp 0825	139,163	157,100	159,100	1.27%	TOTAL	6,262,532	6,691,300	6,579,500	-1.67%
11 Edison 0830	235,065	245,300	214,300	-12.64%	BUSINESS & FINANCE				
13 Clinton 0835	120,534	134,300	256,800	91.21%	Business Office 0500	9,165,113	10,178,500	9,843,800	-3.29%
15 Cranford 0840	170,969	154,500	156,200	1.10%	Accounting 0510	6,891	8,000	8,000	0.00%
17 Rockaway 0845	49,249	71,400	276,500	287.25%	Contract Obligations 0515	1,235,429	800,000	1,000,000	25.00%
19 W. New York 0850	80,472	92,400	103,300	11.80%	Computer Center 0520	1,906,067	3,258,200	3,740,000	14.79%
20 Jersey City 0852	132,156	148,800	180,200	21.10%	Membership Processing 0530	311,919	345,500	355,500	2.89%
21 Livingston 0855	178,243	194,100	196,600	1.29%	Headquarters Operation 0540	2,012,650	2,231,600	2,271,900	1.81%
23 Emerson 0860	29,442	33,000	0	-100.00%	Mail Room & Production 0550	124,724	230,000	185,000	-19.57%
25 Hazbrouk Hgts 0865	191,102	216,600	219,400	1.29%	Financial Admin Fees 0580	157,492	155,000	190,000	22.58%
27 Wayne 0870	103,322	120,700	125,700	4.14%	Insurances 0585	367,834	434,000	483,500	11.41%
28 Stanhope 0873	112,874	129,600	77,300	-40.35%	TOTAL	15,288,119	17,640,800	18,077,700	2.48%
29 Higher Ed 0875	8,654	13,000	13,000	0.00%					
TOTAL	26,619,601	26,005,800	25,117,200	-3.42%					
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:									
Organizational Dev Office 0900	3,201,601	2,689,700	2,911,400	8.24%					
Organizational Dev Field 0904	0	0	24,000	0.00%					
Organizational Dev Program 0905	339,895	460,000	378,000	-17.83%					
Active Supportive 0910	23,575	358,200	421,000	17.53%					
FAST Program 0915	4,267	44,000	30,000	13.64%					
Conference Expenses 0920	237,243	362,700	459,300	26.63%					
ESP & Inclusive Org 0930	38,225	51,200	76,200	48.83%					
NJEA Preservice 0945	31,908	0	0	0.00%					
Summer Leadership Conf 0955	865,488	1,018,800	1,354,700	32.97%					
Leadership Operations 0965	2,071	37,000	37,000	0.00%					
New Member Orientation 0975	78,568	194,000	0	-100.00%					
Membership Recruitment 0977	1,892	30,000	20,000	-33.33%					
Membership Promotion 0980	154,881	183,500	33,500	-81.74%					
Members of Color Initiative 0985	121,491	330,000	342,500	3.79%					
TOTAL	5,101,105	5,759,100	6,107,600	6.05%					

This article was in the October, 2023 *NJEA Review* magazine.

UNDERSTANDING NJEA PAC'S ENDORSEMENT PROCESS



On Nov. 7—and sooner for those who choose early voting or vote by mail—New Jersey voters will elect 120 state legislators as well as hundreds of candidates for county and local office. Endorsing and electing candidates who support NJEA's goals significantly increases the association's ability to pass favorable legislation and stop destructive legislation. Recently, that favorable legislation has included a new law that expands sick leave to include the use of sick days to care for children and other loved ones. It also includes successful legislation to ensure just cause protections for educational support professionals (ESPs) and relief from the high costs of health insurance. Our PAC endorsement process also helped elect a governor who is fully funding the state's pension systems after decades of underfunding.

The NJEA Political Action Committee (PAC) prides itself on having a clear, fair and democratic process leading up to the endorsement of a candidate. But how exactly does the PAC endorsement process work?

It begins with screening committees that evaluate candidates.

PAC screening committees are established for each legislative district. Each committee includes members of the NJEA PAC Operating Committee from their respective counties and the NJREA legislative county chairperson. Screening committees also include NJEA Government Relations Committee and Congressional Contact Committee members from counties involved, the county president, and NJEA Executive Committee members from the counties involved.

Prior to meeting candidates, the committee reviews completed NJEA questionnaires submitted by the candidates. If a candidate is an incumbent, their voting record is examined.

Each candidate screening session lasts up to an hour, allowing time for candidates to make a presentation and answer questions. Questions are based upon issues relevant to public education and advocacy for the people who work in public schools. They may also cover issues and concerns specific to the membership of the counties within the legislative districts involved.

Next, the NJEA PAC Operating Committee considers the screening committees' recommendations.

The screening committee recommends endorsements to the NJEA PAC Operating Committee.

To make that recommendation, the screening committee discusses the merits of each candidate. The committee may recommend the endorsement of one candidate in a race, recommend no endorsement, or recommend a "your choice" option, which indicates that both candidates are in agreement with NJEA's key goals and positions.

The 125-member NJEA PAC Operating Committee consists of NJEA's officers, the NJEA Executive Committee, the county association presidents, the NJEA Government Relations Committee, the Congressional Contact Committee, the presidents of NJREA and NJEA Preservice, the NJREA legislative chairperson, and two NJREA regional legislative chairs.

The NJEA PAC Operating Committee reviews the recommendations and votes to determine who will become NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates.

The outcome: Your interests as a public school employee are represented.

In the judgement of your fellow NJEA members, who were representing your interests as a public school employee, the candidates they ultimately endorsed deserve the votes of NJEA members. That distinction—your interests as a public school employee—is important.

The members of the NJEA PAC Operating Committee, as well as the members of each county's PAC screening committees, are school nurses, librarians, bus drivers, custodians, classroom teachers, higher education faculty, school social workers, paraprofessionals, retirees—in short, they come from every NJEA membership category.

Those members represent a wide range of political interests, are members of different political parties, and even hold opposing viewpoints on some of the most controversial issues of our time. Despite that, the issues that unite them for an NJEA PAC endorsement are school funding, collective bargaining, racial and social justice, standardized testing, pensions, health benefits, the health and safety of students and staff, and the myriad other issues that matter to public school employees like you.

Pages 31 and 32 of this edition of the list the candidates who earned endorsement this year. 🗳️