



# The WTEA Today

*The WTEA Today is a publication of the*

## **Woodbridge Township Education Association**

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***Season's Greetings  
& Best Wishes for  
a Happy New Year***



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## **President's Message...**

One of the primary strategic goals of the WTEA leadership this year has been to reexamine and refine the way that our members are represented in our work locations. I hope it is your observation, as it is mine, that our Association Representatives are conscientious and capable members who work hard to improve their colleagues' work lives. Our goals have been to make sure that our Association Representatives are well trained for their role and are elected through a process that best reflects the interests of our members.

Our new Rep Training program has been continuing for more than a year. In October of this year, we brought together all of our reps to help them form an "Association Team" in each building. This is important because the work of the Association simply cannot be accomplished by one person without help. In one of our smaller work locations, the Association Team may require the effort of two or three members. In larger work locations, the team may consist of as many as seven or eight members.

Please support our Association Representatives in any way you can. The work that is done at the building level is the foundation of our great organization.

A second goal for this year consists of a review of how our Representative Council is constituted. This is an important matter because the Representative Council is the policy forming body of WTEA. Most major decisions of our organization, other than election of leaders and contract ratification, are made by the Representative Council. Currently, the Representative Council is composed of the officers of WTEA, one Head Association Representative from each work location, current members of the NJEA Delegate Assembly (there are two this year), all delegates to our county organization (there are 18 this year), and the chairpersons of the WTEA Negotiations and Member Rights Committees. Only the two NJEA DA members and the two committee chairs are not elected directly by the WTEA membership.

However, some members have suggested changing to a Rep Council system by which most members of the council are elected at the building level, so that a large work location would directly elect more members to the council than a small work location. With our current system, most of the members of the council are elected "at large" or by the membership as a whole. Even though the current system provides us with a council that is roughly proportional to our members at each level (for example, 26.6% of our members work at the high school level and are currently represented by 24.4% of the Rep Council), this balance is not guaranteed by our current system. Keep in mind, however, that nearly all members of the Rep Council will always be elected by our members.

In response to this concern, our leaders developed a set of proposed amendments to the WTEA Constitution that would be necessary to reflect the changes suggested. After a full discussion at our meeting in November, there seemed to be little interest in changing the composition of the Representative Council. Citing the important role our MCEA Reps play in the representation of our members, the Rep Council decided a change would not be prudent at this time.

Therefore, we will begin the process of holding WTEA elections later this year with the following positions for service on the council to be filled for the 2008-2010 term:

- All Officer positions
- 18 MCEA Delegate positions
- 27 Head Association Rep positions

If you have any questions or an interest in serving the WTEA in some capacity, please feel free to call me.

**Brian Geoffroy, WTEA President**

## District Instructional Council

December 5, 2007  
Minutes

In attendance were: Arlene Botti, Tara DelGaudio, Amy Ferrara, Brian Geoffroy, Kerstin Hartlieb, Marilyn Krulewicz, Suzanne Mandell, Sharon McGreevey, Carol Parella, Karen Rowland, Lynn Torra and Carol Young

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

### 1. Task Force Reports

#### • Elementary

- A few schools are still experiencing new heater issues.
- Teachers of grades 3 and 4 have questions and concerns regarding the new reading/writing workshop curriculum. A list of questions will be given to Dara Kurlander for clarification. She will also be attending the February Task Force Meeting for follow-up.
- Teachers would like an update on the Rosetta Stone Language Program as well as the new handwriting curriculum.

#### • Middle School

We are continuing to monitor the new I&RS procedures, since many issues are level specific. Each task force will invite members of each school's committee to attend the next task force meeting in order to share their concerns and suggestions for improvement.

#### • High School

- The district is moving ahead on plans to implement on-line grade books. We have been assured that the information will be secure and not available to the parents or students.
- Concerns regarding the "Out of the Box" lesson plan pilot at J. F. K. High School were raised. Brian Geoffroy stated that he is looking into the issue.
- The state is now requiring that home instruction students also receive physical education. We are

suggesting that the district prepare packets containing materials and scoring rubrics which the home instructors will assign to their students. It is not the teacher's responsibility to prepare lessons for the home instructor.

- The following building safety issues are major concerns:

a) Woodbridge High School has an on-going infestation of roaches which needs immediate attention (Avenel Middle School as well).

b) Woodbridge High School also has a room where floor tiles were removed and never replaced. This creates an obvious hazard also requiring immediate attention.

- In order to assist the district in identifying health and safety issues, the WTEA has developed a form which is available for any staff member to complete when a health or safety situation exists.

- Fall sports coaches have been asked to sign forms on which they agree not to call or text message students on their personal cell phones. Any communication should be made using the parent's home or cell phone numbers.

- All high schools are experiencing a problem getting replacement markers for their dry erase boards.

- A discussion took place lauding the benefits of the Smart Boards.

### 2. Staff Dress Code Issues

Board of Education regulations state that teachers should "dress in a manner reflecting their professional assignments". No specific items of clothing are listed as being prohibited.

### 3. Holocaust and Prejudice Reduction Program

Suzanne Mandell will be attending a meeting at Kean and will share the information with us.

### 4. Goals

The following have been identified as issues for consideration this school year:

- recycling
- revision of elementary guidance curriculum
- new handwriting curriculum for elementary level
- continued monitoring of new programs
- monitoring of new I&RS committee procedures

### 5. Old Business

- Any middle school teacher who is delegated to run meetings for their grade level should do so in lieu of a faculty meeting or an assigned duty unless they are monetarily compensated.
- Professional Development: The state has developed new professional development regulations. One is to establish a Professional Development committee in each school consisting of the principal and three (3) teachers. Another regulation states that the 2010 school year will be the first year for all teachers to begin the next round of 100-hour professional development requirement.
- Plan Book Evaluations: Only an administrator can sign-off on a plan book. Staff leaders can check off the names of those who have submitted their plan books, but they are not qualified to evaluate or sign them.
- QSAC: The district has established a fifteen (15) member committee consisting of administrators and teachers. Brian Geoffroy and Sharon McGreevey are among those members. Sub-committees were formed, each charged with overseeing one area of monitoring in order to be sure that all necessary documentation is in place.

6. The next meeting will be held on February 6, 2008, Conference Room A, in the Administration Building.

7. Meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Torra, Chairperson

## Professional Development Update...

by Rhonda Dalton, Professional Development Committee Chair

NJEA and NEA have both embraced professional development and are offering fantastic on-line courses for both professional and support staff. You need your membership number to sign into the "Members Only" section at: [www.njea.org](http://www.njea.org) or [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org). Links are also available on the [www.wtea.org](http://www.wtea.org) website.

Please visit both sites, as this is another great benefit offered to you through our association. Along with the NJ Professional Education Port, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/njpep/>, there are professional development opportunities for everyone.

Due to the numerous staff development opportunities offered by the school district this past fall, we decided to wait until the spring where we could have a larger block of uninterrupted time to offer a better selection of job embedded PD opportunities designed to enhance student learning.

In January, we begin scheduling workshops for the Spring Staff Development Academy.

Of special interest this year are workshops designed for specific grade levels where teams of teachers will: research on-line resources that align with their current curriculum, have a book study group, create/share curriculum based games using "GameShow Prep," cards, dice, etc. The possibilities are endless, with this years focus on making student learning fun and engaging.

If you are interested in sharing some ideas and teaching a course, please complete the "Volunteer to Teach a PD Course.doc" form that is available on both the intranet and WTEA website at:

<http://www.wtea.org/Professional%20Development.htm>

### Web Resources for Teachers...

#### For Everyone:

<http://www.sitesforteachers.com>  
<http://www.history.com/>  
<http://www.njea.org/pd/home.aspx>

#### Economics:

[http://stosselintheclassroom.org/resources\\_08.html](http://stosselintheclassroom.org/resources_08.html)

#### History:

<http://www.history.com/>

#### Math:

<http://www.nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/vlibrary.html>  
<http://www.mathsisfun.com/>  
<http://www.mathplayground.com/>

#### Special Education:

<http://www.schwablearning.org/>  
<http://www.ldonline.org/>

#### ESL:

<http://www.tolearnenglish.com/>

#### Language Arts/English:

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/>

## State Commission Awards Contracts For New School Employees' Health Plan

On Monday, November 19, the State Health Benefits Commission met in Trenton to consider bids from health care providers for the purpose of selecting the providers for the new School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP).

Following a closed executive session, the Commission voted to award the PPO-1 and PPO-2 contracts to Horizon. They also voted to limit the number of HMO's to two, and awarded those contracts to Aetna and Cigna.

The rate structure for each of the programs is now under review by Aon Consultants, Inc., the consulting firm engaged to help develop the request for proposals (RFP), to analyze all bid proposals, and to establish rate structures.

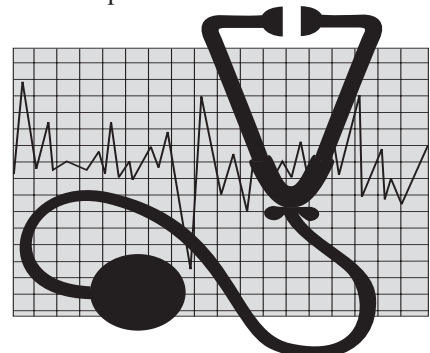
The new rates are expected sometime in early to mid-December.

Final details related to the network structure are still being addressed.

Be sure to check back at [njea.org](http://njea.org) for additional updates in the days to come.

## Medical Coverage Update...

The Horizon Hospital dispute has been resolved. JFK Memorial Hospital and Muhlenberg Hospital have completed negotiations with Horizon BCBSNJ and will remain part of the Horizon BCBSNJ hospital network. Both the PPO and the Traditional Plans will continue to be accepted at both hospitals.



## News from the Middlesex County Education Association

### **MCEA Awards Information**

The Middlesex County Education Association is proud to announce the following awards to be given at the May 29, 2008 meeting of the MCEA Representative Council.

The deadline for all applications and nominations is **February 15, 2008**. Applications are available at the WTEA office, and available on-line at [www.wtea.org](http://www.wtea.org) and [www.middlesexcountyeducationassociation.org](http://www.middlesexcountyeducationassociation.org).

#### **MCEA PAUL DIMITRIADIS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**

This year MCEA will grant two \$1,000 scholarships to children of MCEA members. The student is asked to write a 500-word composition, which is judged by an impartial outside party. Spread the word about these scholarships.

#### **MCEA FREDERICK HIPP ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

MCEA has recognized a local association leader for the past several years. Any member can be nominated; however, nominations must be accompanied by written rationale.

#### **MCEA FRIEND OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AWARD**

This award was initiated in 1988 and is given to a person who has helped our schools but is not eligible for MCEA membership. The purpose of the award is to call to public attention someone who has greatly served the public schools and, through them, the children of Middlesex County. It is also the purpose of the award to demonstrate that the MCEA and its members believe that service to education is one of the highest forms of service anyone can give. Nominations must be accompanied by written rationale.

### **ESP Corner**

Submitted by Penny DeSiena,  
MCEA ESP Chair

**This has been a banner year for Middlesex County's Education Support Professionals (ESP's). Our numbers are growing, and our members are getting involved at breakneck speed. ESP are serving as Presidents of Locals, on Negotiating teams, as chair people of important committees. They are energetic, and dedicated as never before. No longer will ESP sit back and let administrators dictate what is best for them. They take strong positions for and against issues that affect not only ESP, and certificated staff, but also the students they serve.**

**Exciting things have happened in the last month. First, Lois Yukna was elected NEA Director at the Representative Assembly. Congratulations to Lois. Second, the first annual ESP Fair happened after the MCEA County Overnight. To say it was a huge success is an understatement. Even without the benefit of County Wide publicity, many members attended the ESP Fair. The ESP Committee is grateful to Sarah Vacca for allowing the committee to run the first FAIR side by side with the County Overnight. Needless to say, this event added much more to her responsibilities as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, and the person responsible for the success of the County Overnight. Also, the ESP Committee is one of the most responsive groups of members you could wish for. They drove the Fair and made it their own.**

**And last, but not least, drum role please; One of our own, Pat Lieberman has been chosen as the NJEA ESP of the Year. Pat won this honor by a blind vote. Her competition was the most fierce I have ever been privileged to judge. I believe the number of ESP that was in the pool" eligible for nomination for this honor is 53,000 members. Pat's name will submitted to NEA for nomination for NEA's ESP of the Year. So many great people to choose from, but only one person will be chosen. NJEA's nomination is one of the strongest in years. Congratulation to Pat, to Sayreville, Pat's district, and to Middlesex County for their hard work to make sure that the nominee's application was in order. Even with all that was included, it did not cover all that Pat has done, and does for all our members, certificated and ESP.**

**As chair of the County ESP Committee, I believe MCEA could pull off a "hat trick", or, triple play. There is still time to nominate someone for ESP Career Achievement Award, and ESP Friend of Education awards. Please look at the forms, look at the people that have worked hard through the years with and for ESP members. Present and former County members are eligible for nomination. This can be former County ESP winners, Board members, Certificated members, or, members of the public. The Career Achievement Award nominees must be currently employed and an active member of NJEA. Please check the NJEA Website for details.**

**So congratulations to MCEA for the outstanding achievements this year.**