



# LONG BRANCH SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

“ADVOCATING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW”

September  
Volume 1, Issue 1



## The Monthly Advocate

### Association Representatives

#### What is an AR? What is their role in schools?

An Association Rep is a paid position elected by the membership of each school that represents the membership at that particular school. An Association Representative is responsible for attending Rep Council meetings once a month with the Executive team bringing forth any concerns of members or ideas for their building.

AR's are supposed to maintain an LBSEA bulletin board at each work site, duplicate flyers and distribute association materials to the members of their building. AR's also are to call a 10 minute meeting after each Rep Council meeting to discuss the association business. AR's also help with membership enrollment and assisting members if there is an incident where a member needs to have representation. Representation and member rights are later discussed in the newsletter. Because of the roles and responsibilities of an AR it is a paid position. It is up to the building membership to elect association representatives that will have their best interest in mind and will carry out these responsibilities to the best of their abilities.



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Early Career Members .....	2
Why we are Members .....	2
Negotiation Talk .....	3
What is PRIDE .....	4
Navigating the NJEA website	4
Explaining our Contract ...	5
Weingarten Rights .....	5
From the Desk of the President .....	6

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Navigating as a new member
- Important Upcoming Dates
- Getting Involved with PRIDE
- Understanding Contract language



## Early Career Members (Untenured)

All members regardless of tenure have full membership rights with NJEA as well as the local union which for Long Branch is the LBSEA. A strong union is one where members are involved. New career members can learn more about their benefits and support system by joining the early career member network.

This network over the years has also hosted bowling, paint nights, holiday shopping events and more to reach out to new members and create a professional network across your school district and the state. There are also extra opportunities for professional development credits as well.

The more you advocate for yourself, your career and your students, the bigger impact you can make as a member.

To get more information or find out information on upcoming events please visit:

[Njea.org/earlycareermembers](http://Njea.org/earlycareermembers) or check out the local chapter, Central Con-

***“New career members can learn more about their benefits and support system by joining the early career member network”***

### Upcoming Dates

On NJEA website/events tab

- **9/12** Degrees not Debt Webinar
- **10/4-10/5 Health and Safety Conference**—sign up on NJEA website
- **10/14**—Degrees not Debt Webinar—again
- NJEA Convention **Nov. 7-9** this year

On MCEA website

Under PRIDE

- **9/30** Family night at IPlay America in Freehold—Free Ride pass with a purchase of a \$10 game card. Print and bring flyer

### Why is Membership Important?

Being a member of the union provides members with protection and benefits that non-active members are not receiving, and ensures our contracts are protected. If membership is too low than the contract is no longer negotiable by a school union and can be created and determined by the board of education. That also means that nothing will be guaranteed for your career.

For any union to be strong and able to negotiate you have to have a strong active membership. Here is a list of just some of the direct member benefits.

- **Receiving \$1 million in employment liability insurance and fully covered for legal defense and payment of any judgment**
- **Can Vote on contract, election of officers, or other association matters - voting does matter in our Union.**
- **Eligible for legal services for tenure claims, certification issues, retirement issues, wage and hour claims, and worker compensation claims.**
- **Legal services for discrimination arising out of employment and investigations by Criminal and Child Protective Services emanating from employment.**
- **Eligible for free professional development trainings, free retirement consultation services, and certification consultation services.**
- **Are eligible to receive assistance in obtaining National Board Certification**

## Negotiations– It's a Process

I scream, You scream, We all Scream! More Money! In the grand scheme of negotiating a school contract in NJ the two most important items based on member surveys in NJ are salary increases and better health benefits.

### The Process Simplified

1. Preparation for Negotiations— This is where membership is surveyed based on data/questions provided by NJEA, obtain financial information from the board, , review any issues with current health insurance, current language, draft a proposal and set priorities.
2. Negotiation team comprised of dedicated and trained members. President of association is tasked with appointing 3-7 members representing various constituencies of the association per the constitution of the LBSEA. We also have a committee for negotiations comprised of those who would like to volunteer.
3. Creating team roles, such as spokesperson, recorder, observers, and a communicator
4. Writing the proposal based on must haves, and would like to have
5. Set dates for negotiating, proposals checked by team and rechecked by NJEA Rep (qualified and experienced contract negotiator)
6. Negotiations. This may weeks, or months with long hours put in to reach an agreement. Once all parties agree it goes for ratification by general membership.

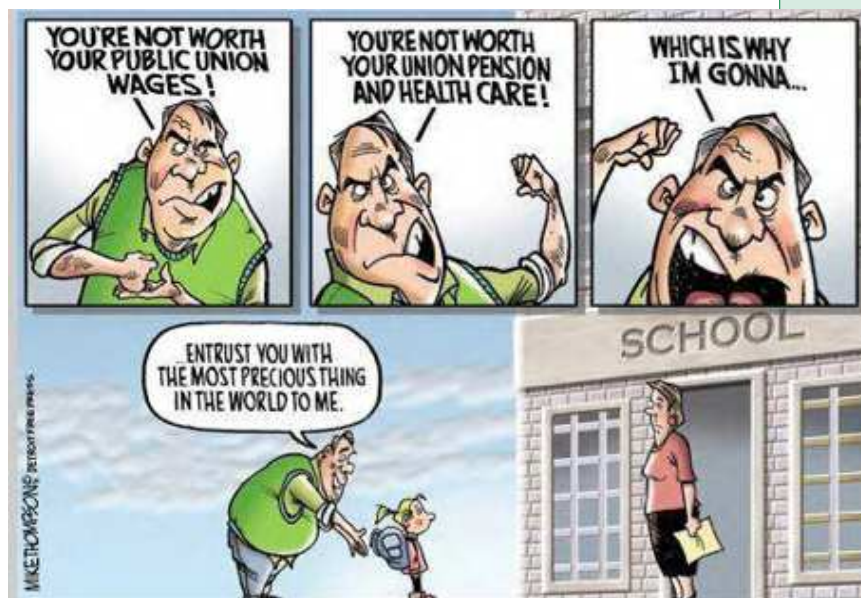
\*Remember, negotiation team members, union executives, and reps are all in the same profession as the members represented and are fighting for the same interests for all membership.

### A Few Highlights from the Previous Contract

Healthcare premiums were frozen at the 2016-2017 rates for the length of our contract which lasts through 2020.

Salary Increases were at 3.5% the first year, and 3.1 % for the remaining years of the contract. The median increase in NJ was 2.75 %.

The Coaches Salary Guide was unfrozen and stipends were negotiated to represent our county average.



## A Welcome from the Vice President

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself and thank you, our members for electing me to this position.

For members that do not know who I am, my name is Jeremy Martin and I have been a guidance counselor in the district for 10 years. I started at West End, and have worked to replace counselors at the Gregory Elementary School and High School before landing at our Middle School which I love.

I got involved in our Union firstly because I wanted to know what I was spending my membership dues on, and then started to attend workshops and conferences and found out how important being an active member is for not only my career but those of my colleagues. This monthly newsletter is one of the many endeavors I promised so I hope you enjoy our first issue.

## Getting to Know PRIDE and FAST

PRIDE in Public Education is a campaign that shares the successes of New Jersey's public schools while building community support and involvement. We can use PRIDE funding from NJEA to create and host Community Events.

### FAST

Families and Schools Together work for children, program. The goal of FAST is to involve parents and families in their children's education through programs and events to help improve student achievement and ensure that families feel welcome and connected to our schools. At the Long Branch Middle School FAST hosted local law enforcement

and bilingual families to connect them with our school and our local resources. As a membership we can use funding from PRIDE to create community events and build better



*"PRIDE and FAST are all about community outreach relationships with our families."*

## Navigating the NJEA Website

The website for NJEA is [njea.org](http://njea.org). Members should sign in and create your profile. This will help keep you updated with events and information as well as help maintain your profile which is needed by our local union when sending out information.

**Active members receive their NJEA card each year. On that card is your NJEA username.** You will need that to create your sign-in account.

\*Active members please sign in to NJEA at least once when you get your cards so that you can make sure NJEA and the LBSEA has your correct email address (personal not school) and correct mailing address. Very often members, including elected positions will forget to update their address if they move and this can prevent you from receiving important information, especially with us entering a negotiation year.

## Did You Know?

### HIPP Foundation Grants

- These are NJEA-supported grants for innovative educational initiatives that are not funded by the school budget. Any teacher can go onto the NJEA website and complete a grant application!
- There is also a contest on the NJEA website under pride for a teacher Wish List!

### Fun Fact:

Any member can attend a Rep Council meeting even if you are not an Association Rep. You cannot vote on Rep Council business but you are allowed to sit in on the meeting and speak.

Trainings—Members can attend AR trainings if you'd like to be better qualified for the position and other workshops if interested in other positions or committees for local and state union involvement. Not only do workshops provide important information and training to become better prepared for responsibilities and helping members, it also provides networking with district members all over NJ.



## Weingarten Rights

All members should know these rights and employ them when you feel that you are in a meeting where you are being disciplined or the meeting will affect your personal working conditions.

- \*I Respectfully request that my Association Representative be present at the meeting. .\*
- Do Not Walk out if an administrator asks you to sit there, but choose silence. Do not abandon your location.
- Document in writing the incident
- Don't Delay—Timelines are Very Important
- Use your contract as a guide.—can access online
- Follow orders unless there is potential for personal injury. You can grieve the orders later.



---

*“Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”*

---

## Breaking down the Contract

We are going to jump right into our current contract which can be found on our district website. To find our contract please go to the long branch public school website, [www.longbranch.k12.nj.us](http://www.longbranch.k12.nj.us) and click the Departments Tab. Once open please click on the PERSONNEL tab and scroll down to BARGAINING AGREEMENTS. There are a few contracts with PDF files uploaded. You must click on the LBSEA 2017-2020 PDF. This is our association contract. The others do not apply to LBSEA members.

Article III outlines the Grievance Procedure.

What is a Grievance? As outlined a grievance is a claim by an employee, a group of employees or the Association, based on the interpretation, application or violation of the policies, agreements, or administrative decisions affecting them.

**You can only grieve something that is in violation of our contract.** Only those grievances involving claims that are confined to and based upon an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication to the express provisions of this Agreement shall be subject to the arbitration level of the grievance procedure as set forth herein.

STEP 1— A grievance MUST be initiated within thirty (30) days from the date on which the grievant knew or should have known of the event giving rise to the grievance. Before filing a grievance please speak with a Building Rep so that they can go over how to resolve the possible grievance.

**Please continue reading Article III to see the four levels of grievance and the next steps that can be taken in a grievance procedure.**



Long Branch School  
Employees Association  
494 Broadway  
Long Branch, NJ 07740

The Executive Team

President—Jo-Anne Montanti

Vice President—Jeremy Martin

Secretary—Tiffany Monroe

Treasurer—Theresa Morrissey

Communications— Greg Macolino

## From the Desk of the Association President

I am excited to welcome you back to school in the Long Branch School District. We are the Long Branch School Employees Association (LBSEA), a union that represents approximately 700 staff.

The LBSEA is also a member of Monmouth County Educational Association (MCEA), New Jersey Educational Association (NJEA), and the National Educational Association (NEA.) They, like us, recognize that our working conditions and our students' learning environment are one and the same. Together, we are the union and YOU ARE LBSEA.

LBSEA goals are:

Advocating for each of our members,  
Partnering with the district in providing quality education for all students,  
Advancing the profession of education,  
Strengthening public education by uniting the power of educators, parents and local communities.

Being an active union member has never been more important than it is right now. We must stand together and support one another as we work to protect and improve public education in Long Branch. As educators we experience many daily successes and challenges in our classrooms, and LBSEA is here to celebrate your successes and provide support in your challenges.

Please reach out to your school Association Representative (AR) who will be elected by your peers to support you, as well as our staff and elected leaders at LBSEA if you have any questions or concerns. You will receive regular LBSEA communication through personal e-mails and the monthly LBSEA newsletter, *The Advocate*. Please read them as they will include important information, bargaining updates and calls for action. Our website, [www.mylbsea.org](http://www.mylbsea.org), is also available as a resource. It is important to stay connected, so make sure your personal email and contact information are on file at the LBSEA office and NJEA website under your profile.

Finally, thank you for choosing to be a fellow Long Branch Educator and dedicating your time to impact the lives and learning of the students in Long Branch. Welcome to the new school year.

In Solidarity,

Jo-Anne Montanti

