



## LONG BRANCH SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

“ADVOCATING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW”

October/November  
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Do you remember where you were on March 13, 2020? That morning I went to Dunkin Donuts, picked up my coffee and a coffee-roll (personal fav), and dropped my daughter off with her babysitter before coming in to do breakfast duty. I had a great conversation with some of our 8th graders about what was going on, but said, 'right now school is open, and we have to remember to be safe in our interactions, we should always wash our hands, not share food and drinks during lunch and respect each other's space'. Then a phone call came a few minutes after I arrived home that day that schools were closed. Since then our world has not been the same. The way we interact, and live is drastically different, and our normal ways of life seemed to suddenly stop. But our work in education did not stop. Communication with families continued, teaching continued, our school essential workforce including our maintenance staff, secretaries, and buildings and grounds employees continued to come in and help with our schools and our community. Our Union did not stop either. Many hours were spent talking with administrators, district administration, and teachers, and other staff to navigate education in an unchartered environment.

In-person negotiations had to be halted and with massive educational budget cuts to our district and further cuts looming we were told that other unions in our district agreed to hold off their negotiations, and so we held off while still meeting with our team. Negotiations with the board continued in late September, but the Negotiations team and the Board signed confidentiality agreements so we are not allowed to discuss the negotiation terms. What the team has fought for is directly from the member surveys and what their top priorities are which is Increase in pay, avoiding Freezes, Healthcare Benefits, Yearly Stipends, our Salary Guides, and Safe School Provisions, to name a few.

We held our Ratification meeting last week and the results are in. Our new 3 year contract has passed with 96% of the vote being yes. This is especially important as we are still dealing with the Pandemic and everyday we are working we do not know if we will have to shut down again. I am grateful for everyone that was able to participate and I encourage even individuals who did not vote for our contract to pass to stay engaged in our meetings and newsletters and let our representatives and executive team know what you'd like to see. With the ratification we will see an increase in our pay in the next paycheck, and Retro pay will be paid prior to the new year. For 12 month employees that dates back to July 1 and 10 month employees September 1st. If there is anything that you need please remember you can always reach out to me or any of our executives.

- Jeremy Martin Vice President/LBSEA

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## Association Rep Elections



Association Elections will be taking place Virtually again this year and an email will be coming out soon. Current Association Reps will be in Place through our December meeting. All nominations were received and accepted and at this time nominations are closed. If you did not get nominated or did forgot to put in for reelection you will still be able to do a write-in. We will be using the feedback from last year's elections and due to some staff being virtual and some being in the building we are going to continue the virtual elections. As soon as we have an updated list of staff movement in response to filling school vacancies we will be sending out the Voting Ballot. The online election change must be first ratified into our LBSEA Constitution and Bylaws.

Please remember if you are running and for those that are voting. Association Representatives is a vital elected position that is the bridge to our entire LBSEA membership. Responsibilities include attending the monthly Rep Council Meeting, Advocating on your behalf in each building, Giving out information that is provided at each Rep Council meeting (Extremely Important for our membership to receive this information), and lastly holding a 10 min meeting for members in your school once a month.— I urge our membership as well to reach out if 10 min meetings are not being held. - Accountability is paramount.



*Association Reps meet once a month for a council meeting - Topics discussed at that meeting are then supposed to be reported back to all LBSEA membership at their respective school. Each school should have a 10 minute meeting each month which is run by the Association Representatives in that building*

### **LBSEA Negotiations Team**

Lorraine Tesauro—NJEA Field Rep—Representing the LBSEA

Jo-Anne Montanti— LBSEA President

Jeremy Martin—LBSEA Executive Vice President

Jonathan Trzeskowski— Association Rep—Elementary

Gregory Macolino—LBSEA Communications Secretary– High School

Kenneth Jelks— Association Rep –Maintenance/Bldg&Gds/ Custodians

Terry Johnson—Association Rep—Elementary/Safe School

Jennifer Long—Association Rep—Early Childhood Learning

Much of our team has attended multiple years of training in bargaining and negotiating a contract. Negotiations are meant to create a contract with the board that does not benefit one school, or one group of members but all of our members. This is the mission of our LBSEA. The LBSEA negotiates for all units in our membership, never for just one group.

## PSA Announcement— and a good question!

I would like to take a moment to explain where your dues go that are deducted from our paychecks. Union dues are collected out of our paychecks from payroll and are sent directly to NJEA. The LBSEA treasurer then files a LAFAP report (Local Association Financial Assistance Program) annually using an accountant. The report is sent to NJEA. A portion is then determined based on our total membership and is direct deposited into the LBSEA Bank Account. A monthly bank statement is provided to our Rep Council by the treasurer every month to explain our funds, what money we have available, and our operating budget. This also includes the bank account for our scholarship fund overseen by our scholarship chair and treasurer. That money is also used to cover any attorney fees in cases where we assist members if their careers and/or positions may be in jeopardy. Remember, when you are a member of NJEA, MCEA and LBSEA you receive the assistance of Attorneys if ever their rose a need. Dues Money collected is not used to endorse any political candidates. That is completely separate and called PAC—it would be a separate donation that you would have signed up to do when completing your NJEA application.



Our LBSEA President Joanne Montanti has been working everyday and most of the time well into late evenings to assist members dealing with hardships and navigating through this Covid-19 Pandemic. Negotiations were much more difficult with the inability to hold in-person meetings and creating email lists, and ratification/voting set up was not an easy process virtually. Please look for our President's Message in our next issue.— Joanne Montanti is for All Members.

## A Few Highlights from the Previous Contract

Healthcare premiums were frozen at the 2016-2017 dollar amounts 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 Coaches Salary Guide was unfrozen and stipends were negotiated to represent our county average.



## **School Spotlight**

If you have something special happening in your school please let your school reps know or email the LBSEA Vice President at [jmveep519@yahoo.com](mailto:jmveep519@yahoo.com)

We would like to highlight the amazing things being done by our staff for our students and families

## **Did you Choose your Healthcare Benefit Plan ?**

It is very important to note that you **MUST DECLARE** a healthcare option during this open enrollment period. Even if you are not looking to change your plan you must go onto Frontline and declare you are choosing to **KEEP** your current healthcare plan. If you do not declare your health plan by November 13th you will automatically be enrolled in the NJEHP.

**ALL NEW HIRES**— All new employees hired on or after July 1, 2020 must take the NJEHP as of Jan. 1, 2021. All employees hired prior to July 1, 2020 will be given the opportunity to select the NJEHP starting Jan. 1, 2021 during an open enrollment period prior to that date.

Please click here for an FAQ put together by NJEA

<https://www.njea.org/sehbp-and-ch-78-relief-frequently-asked-questions/>

Option 1—Keep your current plan (must know what your current healthcare plan is)

Option 2—change to another offered plan

Option 3—NJEHP plan

Option 4—waiving your healthcare plan

### **NOTABLE DIFFERENCES with NJEHP**

The notable changes are an increase in copayment for the emergency room visits that do not result in a hospital admission, the out-of-network deductible and coinsurance, and a different reimbursement schedule for out-of-network providers. For prescription drugs, there is an increase in most copayments as well as mandatory use of generic drugs when they are available. - This is directly from the NJEA website.

Chart for Health Plan Comparison

[https://assets.njea.org/njea-media/SEHBPCChart\\_10-2-20.pdf](https://assets.njea.org/njea-media/SEHBPCChart_10-2-20.pdf)