

# WELCOME!

Welcome to the 2006-2007 school year. I hope you have had a smooth transition and are ready for all of the new, exciting adventures the year will bring. Many of us are in new buildings or positions. Hopefully, we are adjusting to our new surroundings. As Editor of the *Lamplighter* and Membership Chairperson, I congratulate all of our new members and welcome you to the Association family as you embark on your new jobs. Whether you are clerical or certificated, you are a valued member. We are here for you! All issues of the *Lamplighter* will in-

clude Contract highlights as well as important information about what is going on in the Association at the local, county, state or national levels. Please note that every issue is proofread by at least two people, not including myself. Every effort is made to correct grammatical and/or spelling errors, but a few will always find their way into an issue. Therefore, I apologize for them in advance and hope the information that the *Lamplighter* provides will make up for them. Until next issue, which will include a contract negotia-

We Make A Difference In the Lives of Our Students!



tions update, remember that what you do makes a difference in a child's life!

Yolanda Gutierrez,  
Membership Chairperson  
*Lamplighter* Editor

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### Points of Interest:

- Visit [njea.org](http://njea.org) and update your membership information.
- Be on the lookout for the negotiations survey! We would like all of them returned so that we can represent the needs of all members.
- If interested in getting more involved in the Association, see your building Rep.(s) or contact Yolanda Gutierrez at [ygutierrez@prodigy.net](mailto:ygutierrez@prodigy.net). Put "VEA" as the subject.
- Do you know who your Reps. are?

## MEET THE LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE...

President:

*Sal Emburgia*

Treasurer:

*Penny Moltane*

Recording Secretary:

*Rosa Mendez*

Corresponding Secretary/  
Membership Chairperson,

*Yolanda Gutierrez*

Vice-President/Grievance  
Chairperson,

*Angela Calakos*

Sal and Angela both work at Rossi Intermediate School in the Special Education Department. Penny is the Business Accounting Secretary for the 11-12 building. Rosa is an ACHIEVE teacher at Mennies Elementary School. Yolanda is currently the computer teacher at

# MEET THE LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE...

Cunningham Elementary School.

I would be remiss if I did not introduce you to a very important person in our Association: Pat Irons, the VEA Office Manager. Pat retired last year from D'Ippolito where she worked as the Data Entry Clerk. She graciously agreed to replace Ethel Lundberg, who retired this past summer.

**Executive Committee:**

*Representing Clerical Staff*  
Marion Ostrowski,  
Main Office

*Representing Elementary Schools*

Daisy Mercado, Cunningham  
Melissa Mendez, Winslow  
Peter Moniodis, Dane Barse  
Carmen Ruiz-Mesa, Mennies

*Representing Middle Schools*

Stephen Slavoff, Wallace

*Representing High Schools and Alternative Programs*

Louis Russo, VHS-South



Elected to Serve All Our Members!

*Who is FICA and why does he get so much of my money?*

## PAYROLL DEDUCTION LIST...

**All Pays**

- FWT: FEDERAL WITHHOLDING
- SWT: STATE TAXES
- FICA: SOCIAL SECURITY
- MED: MEDICARE PORTION OF S.S. (MCARE2 MCARE1)
- UNEMP: UNEMPLOYMENT TAX
- NJWFD: UNEMPLOYMENT WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT
- P/PNPT: PERS PENSION PART TIME
- P/INPT: PERS CONTRIBUTIONS Part Time

**First Pay Only**

- NJEA Dues
  - Prescription
  - Vision Coverage
- Second Pay Only**
- Hospitalization
  - Dental Coverage
  - Teacher Protective Disability Insurance
  - Prudential Disability Insurance
  - American General

**Deductions taken 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Pays**

- All Pension deductions
- Tax Shelters
- Garnishments
- Child Support
- Cumco Credit Union
- CHHS Campaign
- GT Life
- TCH TR (Mentoring)

## PAYROLL DEDUCTION ABBREVIATION KEY...

**Teachers Pension and Annuity**

- T/PEN: PENSION
- T/BACK: BACK PENSION
- T/LOAN: PENSION LOAN
- T/SUPP: SUPPLEMENTAL ANN.
- T/INS: CONTRIBUTION INSURANCE
- T/ARRS: ARREARS PENSION

**Tax Shelters**

- SEELY MetLife
- Prudential TPAFTX

**NJEA:** New Jersey Education Association Dues.

**Insurance**

- US HMO: US Healthcare
- PRESC: Prescription
- DENTL: Dental Coverage
- VISIN: Vision Coverage
- GTLIFE: Group Term Life Imputed
- PRUDIS: Prudential Disability Insurance
- TCHPR: Teachers Protective Disability Insurance (Allen Associates)

**Miscellaneous**

- UNWAY: United Way Campaign
- GARN: Garnishment
- CHILD: Child Support
- CUMCO: CUMCO Credit Union
- AIG: American General
- TCHTR: Mentoring



# HAVE YOU READ YOUR CONTRACT LATELY?

A wise man once said, *"If you don't know your rights, then you don't have any."* A wiser woman once said, *"If you know your rights and don't use them, you still don't have any!"* Many of the problems the VEA troubleshoots are because our members don't know their contract. The following are two articles you should know about your contract.



*Knowing your Contract gives you superpowers!*

## Article 9: The Work Day

The teacher **work day shall be seven (7) hours in length** and shall include *(duty free) lunchtime, Conference/preparation time, pupil contact time*, twenty (20) minutes **prior** to the start of the student day and twenty (20) minutes **after** the student dismissal bell.\*

\*The High Schools have 10 minutes at the start of the day and 13 minutes after the dismissal bell.

Note: Itinerant teachers get travel time which is in **addition** to the times mentioned above.

For more information please read pages 13 to 15.

## Article 13: Teacher Evaluation, Subsection 2

A **pre-conference** shall be held between the supervisor and/or administrator and teacher **within five school days** prior to the observation. The pre-conference may be **waived** only with the **consent** of both the supervisor or administrator and **teacher**.

The observation shall be for a minimum **duration of one class period** in secondary or intermediate, and, in an elementary school for the duration of **one complete subject lesson**.

A **post-conference** will be held between the supervisor and teacher within **ten school days**, not to exceed fifteen calendar days, **for the purpose of reviewing and discussing the written evaluation draft**.

For more information please read pages 19 to 20.

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

The following questions have been asked by members.

Question 1: My baby is sick and I have to take him/her to the doctor, can I use one of my sick days instead of a personal day, since I have more sick days and want to save my personal days for later?

Answer: Sick days are for when **YOU** are sick or have to go to the doctor. It is illegal to use them for something or someone else. Your personal days are the only days that you can use for illness in the immediate family. In the past we have had individuals who have used their sick days to go on a field trip with their child and have been docked a day's pay. The excuse, "I know other people who do it..." is not going to work if you get caught.

Question 2: My lunch and prep is back to back, can I go run a few errands during that time?

Answer: You can leave the building during your lunch and do whatever you want, but do not leave your building during your prep without permission from your building administrator. If you should get into an accident while out of the building without permission

you may lose your right to Workmen's Compensation; not to mention the fact that you were not where you were supposed to be which could be seen as abandonment of duty. My advice is, think about your family and play it safe.

Question 3: A co-worker is not doing his/her job. It's not fair to the rest of us who do what we are supposed to be doing. We have complained to the principal and he/she has asked us to put it in writing so that she/he can do something about the problem. If I write it anonymously is it okay?

Answer: **NEVER** put anything in writing about a member that may result in a disciplinary action and could impact his/her livelihood. There is no such thing as an anonymous letter since we have Contract language that states an individual has to be informed as to who made the complaint. Article 13 Section H on page 21 states: *Upon receiving a formal complaint concerning a teacher, the administrator to whom it is presented shall, within three school days, inform the teacher in writing the nature of the complaint, with the particulars and the name of the complaining party.* If the individual suffers a financial loss due to your letter he/she can sue you for loss of

property rights. Simply put, in a union setting, you, as a fellow unit member, could be the subject of personal legal liability. Is this a risk you are willing to take? The bottom line is, let administration investigate the problem write their own report.

*When in doubt, ask. The only dumb question is the one not asked...*

Question 4: How do I find out if I'm being paid the right amount?

Answer: Using your paycheck, multiply your gross pay by 22. This should equal the yearly salary listed for your step and degree qualifications in the Contract. If it does not, contact your Association Representative and the Payroll Department Immediately. If you wait too long, you may not be able to get all of your retroactive pay restored!

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# NJEA Lobby Days Speak Out on Special Session Recommendations

On Wednesday, November 15, the four joint legislative committees on Public Employee Pension and Benefit Reform, Public School Funding Reform, Government Consolidation and Shared Services, and Constitutional Reform and Citizens Property Tax Constitutional Convention will make their recommendations to the Legislature.

In anticipation of those recommendations, the following four dates will be lobby days:

**Monday, December 4**  
**Thursday, December 7**

**Monday, December 11**  
**Thursday, December 14**

We are asking NJEA members to come to NJEA Headquarters, located at 180 W. State St. in Trenton, where they will be briefed so they can assist staff in their lobbying efforts. The schedule for the lobby days will be:

9:15 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Coffee and . . .  
Briefing by GR and Officers

10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Lobby in the Statehouse or  
attend committee meetings

12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Lunch at NJEA

1 p.m. - until

Afternoon committee meetings on  
December 4 & 7  
Assembly and Senate voting sessions on  
December 11 & 14



**PLEASE NOTE:**

To attend, please RSVP to Liz Rylak at 609-599-4561 ext. 2358 or email [lrylak@njea.org](mailto:lrylak@njea.org).

Please bring a form of PHOTO IDENTIFICATION.

Please CARPOOL whenever possible; limited parking is available at NJEA.

Please photocopy this flier for your members.