

February 2011

Middletown Township Education Association

News & Views

Nominations for the Executive Committee

The following nominations for the Executive Committee were made at the February 3, 2011 Representative Council Meeting:

President- Linda Guyer

First V.P. -John Cholette

Second V.P. - Debby Mrykalo

Treasurer- Gerry Moore

Secretary- Gail Ritter

H.S. Representative- Ray McLoughlin

M.S. Representative- MaryEllen Connelly

Elementary Representative- MaryEllen Cotter

Secretarial Representative- Mary Miceli, Roseanne Nardini

Nominations for delegates to the 2011 National Education Association Convention (NEA/RA), which takes place in July are as follows: Representatives- Ray McLoughlin, Pat Pellegrini, Justine Ling, and Patti Giordano. Alternate- Rich Decker

Any additional names for any position may also be placed in nomination by means of a petition presented at the start of the March 2, 2011 Representative Council meeting. Petitions must be signed by ten percent (10%) of the active members of the Association.

Officer positions and NEA/RA positions require 92 signatures. Executive Committee Representatives require 36 signatures for the elementary teacher representative, 22 signatures for the middle school representative, 26 for the high school representative and 8 signatures for the ESP representative.

Uncontested positions will be declared filled by the Representative Council, pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order.

Therapy Dog Available

MTEA member and Harmony teacher, Jean Yamakaitis-Geronimo, has undergone therapy training with her dog, Cloe. Jean advises she is available to make visits of any kind, to anyone who may enjoy a lift that a visit from a therapy dog can give. This need could be for someone who is a home shut-in, in a nursing home, someone in the hospital, schools, classrooms, etc. She can also give presentations with the dog to groups, explaining what therapy dogs are and what they do. They are permitted in any public or private setting where there is a desire for their visits. Jean and Cloe have been trained, certified and insured by Bright and Beautiful Dog Therapy of Morris Hills, NJ. Jean is also a certified dog handler. There is no charge for Jean and Cloe's services. Jean can be contacted via her home email @ irishizeblue@comcast.net or through the district email @ geronimoj@middletownk12.org.



Upcoming MTEA Workshops

Response to Intervention (Professional Staff) March 16, 2011

Google Docs Workshop (ESP Staff) March 30, 2011

Autism (Professional Staff) April 6, 2011

Emails will be sent out prior to all workshops.

NJEA Legislative Action– Phil Couch

February 17, 2011

I attended NJEA Legislative Congress on February 5 a week or so ago. It was disturbing to hear in each speaker from the union leadership the extent to which we and our profession is under attack by Governor Christie and his administration.

It is clearly apparent that now, more than ever before, we need to solidify our membership and vigorously take part in the political arena that will define our ability to deliver the quality education to our students and protect our live hood for which we have struggled so long to define and defend.

Under the guise of educational reform, Governor Christie seeks to deconstruct public education in New Jersey, arguably the finest system in the country, through a series of initiatives. Among these are attempts to limit our earning power by eliminating salary increases for advanced degrees, diminishing our pensions that we have contributed to our entire careers, siphoning off an additional billion dollars in public dollars to fund charter, private and religious schools and the expense of your public schools.

The lecture broke out into smaller sessions where questions could be asked of the attending legislators of both the Senate and the Assembly. Not surprisingly, given their stance on these issues, not one representative from Monmouth County was in attendance.

Afterward the whole group reassembled to hear Senator Menendez speak brilliantly about the positive affects public schools had in his success. His support of what we do each day is genuine and unequivocal. He is and will continue to be a staunch defender of public education and deserves our continued support. His visit and his words of support were certainly the high point of the meeting.

At the Legislative Action Team meeting, the main topic of discussion was the necessity to get the vote out. The true strength of unions is to wield the power of voting as a block to have the greatest possible effect on the democratic process. Our purpose is to ensure the outcome of those votes will be of benefit to our students and our profession. As we so clearly see now, **elections have consequences** and we **must do better in delivering the vote** to our endorsed candidate.

Data was distributed to demonstrate the modest turnout by our members and our families and the effect that could have changed the outcome of the gubernatorial election.

Given the current financial mess all towns and BOEs face, it was the focus of the county uniserve officers that we must be aggressive in forming coalitions with our PFAs and BOEs to pass the next school budget. It is their opinion that this can serve as a rebuke of the governor irresponsible call for the public to fail their school budgets. Here in Middletown, the township would like nothing more than to get their hands on the schools portion of the 2% tax hike through a failed budget to offset their own budget shortfalls.

I will meet with our MAC team next week to begin to formulate a strategy to get the vote out in the budget vote and to formulate a plan to have a greater impact in the political process.

MCEA Villapiano Scholarship Forms Available

Students who have a parent that is an MTEA/MCEA member are eligible to apply for the Jean Villapiano Scholarship. This scholarship is for college bound high school seniors, as well as students already attending a college. The guidance offices in all Monmouth County schools have received the MCEA scholarship applications. If you have a high school senior, we encourage you to have your student apply for this scholarship. The deadline for this scholarship is March 23, 2011.

MTEA Dues

Teachers who become Administrators must notify the MTEA by calling 732-758-0200 or by email mtea@verizon.net and request a NJEA-ADP Membership Dues Termination Form to terminate their payroll deductions.

Opt outs take place only twice a year-January and July. As an administrator, you are entitled to continue to enjoy the benefits of NEA/NJEA by having the dues deducted from your pay. You will need to fill out a new application form with the MTEA to continue dues.

First Financial Credit Union

Members have reported that the First Financial Credit Union has changed its minimum balance requirements from \$5 to \$1,000. Members should consider other no fee alternatives, such as ING Direct. ING Direct will allow you to set up a savings and /or checking account. You can set up an automatic bi-monthly or monthly withdrawal from your own checking account, and have it directly deposited into your ING account. For more information, logon to www.ingdirect.com

The XYZ'S of Retirement

If you were unable to make it, or were closed out of, the January Workshop offered by the Monmouth County Education Association, don't worry. The MCEA has another workshop planned for Monday, March 14, 2011. There is still time to plan for retirement in July 2011 or after the start of the 2011-2012 school year. Bob Bobik, the NJEA Pension and Benefits, will be the main speaker. Call the MCEA to reserve your spot at 732-308-2285.