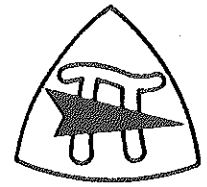


# ADVOCATE



News for Woodbridge Township School Employees

## ***Welcome Back!***

The leaders of WTEA welcome the faculty and staff back to school in preparation for an exciting new school year! We recognize of course, that the school year could never get started effectively without the tremendous amount of work our members do during the summer months.

Your leadership team within WTEA has been busy through the summer as well. Your WTEA Negotiations Team has begun the formal process of obtaining a new all-inclusive collective bargaining agreement for our members. I am proud to announce that the 2014-2015 WTEA Negotiation Team is:

- Brian Geoffroy (Chief Negotiator)
- Dawn Barreiros
- Sean Cuffe
- Cathy Frieder
- John Galvin
- Jennifer Gyenes
- Kerstin Hartlieb
- Bill Leahy
- Mary Ann Miller
- Carol Parella
- Tom Pasko
- Nancy Grbelja – NJEA
- Toyce Collins – WTEA

Later this month, each member will receive a negotiations survey, which will be used to assess our members' priorities. Please take time to complete the survey, especially with regard to recording your subjective responses. We take a great deal of time to read every response. Please return your completed negotiation survey to your Association Rep as soon as possible.

As most of you are well aware with the recent legislation regarding mandatory contributions towards health care premiums, there are some problems we face in our employment that have

been deemed "illegal subjects of bargaining" by the courts and/or legislation. Rest assured, for those areas that we cannot negotiate, we will continue to work with NJEA to lobby for changes in the legislation.

Once again, our number one priority this school year is delivering a fair agreement to our members by this time next year.

## ***Pension & Health Benefits!***

On June 30th, Governor Christie used his line-item veto to cut billions of dollars in legally required pension payments out of the 2015 Fiscal Year Budget. The Legislature had presented a budget bill to the governor that included the legally required \$2.25 billion pension payment for FY2015. (He had already cut the FY2014 payment by \$900 million.) The governor – in another direct violation of Chapter 78 of the Acts of 2011, which he signed – then reduced the FY2015 payment to \$681 million and called on the Legislature to enact further reforms to reduce benefits. The governor also vetoed budget language requiring the state to make quarterly payments into the pension system. NJEA continues to pursue legal action through the courts to require the state to meet its obligations to the public pension system. Earlier this summer, a judge ruled that annual state payments into the system, mandated by Chapter 78, are a **contractual right** of every member of the system. That right will be a cornerstone of NJEA's legal strategy as we seek to force the governor to make the full FY2015 payment.

We will continue to keep you updated on these and all important issues throughout the year.

***Brian Geoffroy, President  
September 2, 2014***