

# TOMORROW AND TODAY, NJFEA



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CENTER FOR  
FUTURE EDUCATORS AT  
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Special thanks to the CFE Student Leadership Team, the major content contributors to the NJFEA newsletter.



# From the Executive Director's Desk

Dear Friends of the CFE,

The end of the year is quickly approaching and while gathering with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving last week, it was an opportunity to stop and reflect on the last year. In these turbulent times, the state of the world is enough to induce stress and anxiety in anyone, and our students and teachers are not immune to those events. In many cases, schools are the frontline of dealing with trauma. Teachers every day work on educating the whole student by listening to understand, clearing up misperceptions, and teaching communication skills, because they know we must teach the student before we can teach any subject. I am grateful for those teachers and students who strive to recognize the humanity that connects us all and work to break down stereotypes and barriers that divide us. I am also grateful to the future educators that intend to take on the mantle and ensure that their students feel seen and safe in their classrooms.

It has been an exciting fall here at the CFE with the installation of our new student officers and ambassadors, the growth of new and current NJFEA chapters, and the first of four regional NJFEA conferences at William Paterson University. The conference was well attended and there were rave reviews. We tried something new by having lunch in the dining hall and it was a hit! Our next NJFEA Conference at Drew University on January 11 has already reached capacity and registration is currently closed, but we will be opening registration for our March 13 conference at Rider University in January.

NJFEA advisors and Tomorrow's Teachers instructors, we are working on finalizing a date for an Educator Summit to be held at NJEA headquarters. We believe that it is important to create a space where the advisors can learn about recent topics in teacher education, as well as network with fellow advisors and instructors to hear about what works well and how that can be adapted to other chapters. Stay tuned for details.

If you are interested in Tomorrow's Teachers training for 2024, registration is now open (register at [tinyurl.com/2b7avpta](https://tinyurl.com/2b7avpta)). Training will take place June 25–26 at TCNJ, and early bird registration is \$550. Finally, the CFE has developed the NJFEA Elementary Curriculum, a free, 10-lesson exploratory curriculum for grades 4–6. Please fill in this brief Google form ([tinyurl.com/9yz9zz6p](https://tinyurl.com/9yz9zz6p)) to gain access.

As we move towards winter break, my wish for all of you and your loved ones is a peaceful, happy, and healthy season.

Yours in learning,

*Jeanne DeColle, Ph.D.*





# 2023 Future Educators Academy

This past summer, CFE ran the second year of the Future Educators Academy! 25 students from all over New Jersey attended the 7-day residential summer program, where they gained valuable insight into the field of education and all it has to offer. Each day began with a guided meditation by Dr. Maureen Connolly, which helped students start every day right by setting intentions. Educators and professionals from different parts of the field ran workshops, including several NJ State Teachers of the Year. Students were also guided through the experience by camp counselors (TCNJ education students), who helped with technical skills, social-emotional goals, and team development through peer leadership. These hopeful and passionate people were a big inspiration to the Academy participants. Take a look at what our future educators did!



From left to right: Camp counselors Alexis Scates, Arianna Febles, Bianca Nicolescu, Lauren Tragale, and Javaree Gordon

From left to right: NJ STOYS Kimberly Dickstein Hughes (2020), Jeanne DelColle (2012), and Angel Santiago (2021)

## Day 1

Students arrived on campus and counselors helped them move into their dorms. After settling in with some ice breakers, students were greeted by Kimberly Dickstein Hughes, 2020 NJ STOY, and Angel Santiago, 2021 NJ STOY. Their interactive, movement-based workshop created the foundation for the week, as students set goals and began to experience growth as educators by developing their vision and passions.



## Day 2

Christine Girtain, 2023 NJ STOY, introduced the STEM lesson students would be teaching later in the week. Participants crafted STEM projects and battery-powered creatures while learning teaching strategies. Afterwards, Dr. Dedra Williams taught about multilingual learners, encouraging students to draw on their empathy while widening their worldview. The final presenter of the day Jeanne Muzi, Slackwood Elementary's principal and 2009 NJ STOY, presented on the diverse makeup of her school and the young learners that Academy students would get to teach. She gifted students with the children's book *Only One You* by Linda Kranz.



## Day 3

Exploration Day! Students got the chance to tour NJEA headquarters and hear from representatives of its different departments and programs. Participants were given an overview of the activities that NJEA carries out that help support the state's educators and schools. After visiting the headquarters, students made their way to Grounds for Sculpture, where they were able to explore and interact with the many different art installations.



## Day 4

Jennifer Skomial, 2019 NJ STOY, led a workshop that focused on establishing classroom values, foundational beliefs that will create the classroom cultures of tomorrow. Ms. Skomial helped students understand the importance of social and emotional safety in a classroom. Students then learned about the college admissions process with Ashley Douglas from TCNJ's admissions office. In the afternoon, students took a deep dive into the archaeology of selves with Theresa Maughan, 2022 NJ STOY. They explored the power of names and how respect for students' identities creates an environment open for learning.



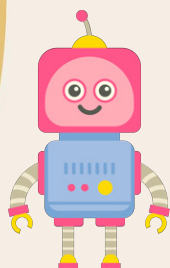
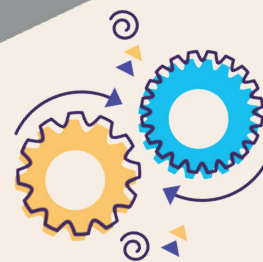
## Day 5

T.J. Belasco helped students to further develop their educator skillset as they discussed social-emotional learning and self-regulation in classroom management. They were given engraved rocks with motivational words to help them find themselves. Students then met with ROSCOE Educators, a first-generation student group within TCNJ's School of Education. In the afternoon, Erin Lichtenwalner spoke to students about Special Education, a target career path for many students in the Academy.



## Day 6

Teaching Day! Each group of campers had spent the week customizing their STEM lessons to make sure they were both inclusive and interactive for their specific group of young learners, and it was finally time to present. In the face of an unexpected scheduling change, students adapted quickly and ensured their young learners had a valuable and fun experience. After the lessons, the students were able to debrief with the supervising teachers on how their lessons went. They also participated in a reflection session led by Dr. Maureen Connolly.





## Day 7 & Celebration

Marisol Espinoza highlighted the importance of covering LGBTQ+ issues and developing inclusive curricula by having students connect their identities to pieces of literature. In the final workshop of the program, Dr. Linda Mayger, worked with students to explore what it takes to be an effective leader. Participants then spent the afternoon presenting their capstone projects to each other, and just like that, the Academy was over! At the celebratory breakfast the next morning, students shared pieces of their capstones with their families, received certificates of completion and awards, and said their goodbyes.







## STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

### President



**Diamond Previlon**  
Union County  
Vocational-Technical  
High School

### Vice President



**Jazmin-Adriana Vargas**  
Union County  
Vocational-Technical  
High School

### Secretary



**Anna Anikiej**  
Roxbury High School

### Communications Officer



**Monserrat Gutierrez  
Bautista**  
Passaic County Technical  
Institute

### CFE Ambassador

### CFE Ambassador



**Gianna Stipelkovich**  
Passaic County Technical  
Institute



**Jayliah Ayala**  
Passaic County Technical  
Institute

### CFE Ambassador



**Amrita Subedar**  
Piscataway High School



# QA

## WHICH ONE GOES IN FIRST?



OR



**Diamond:** Milk first always! You're getting soggy cereal if you drown the milk over it.

**Jazmin:** Milk first! It prevents the cereal from ever getting too soggy.

**Anna:** Cereal first!

**Montserrat:** Of course, it's cereal first!

**Gianna:** Cereal first, so you know how much milk to put in!

**Jayliah:** Cereal first!

**Amrita:** Cereal first, so it all has an equal amount of moistness!



## WHO IS YOUR HERO?

**Diamond:** My parents and best friends. They inspire me to do great things within my passion and are happy to support my every ambition. When I'm close to giving up, they remind me of the purpose behind all my hard work.

**Jazmin:** My family. They have always been there for me since I can remember. When I've needed motivation or words of encouragement, they provide that without me needing to ask.

**Anna:** Mother Teresa, she inspires me to be kind and loving to all.

**Montserrat:** My mother and father, who have given so much up so I can have a better future and become the person I am today. They have inspired me to work to my highest potential and never give up on a dream.

**Gianna:** My aunt and my mom. They inspire me to work hard and do my best.

**Jayliah:** Both my parents. They have played such an important role in helping me to become who I am. They inspire me to be the best person I can because, despite the challenges they faced, they persevered.

**Amrita:** My coworker Brittany. Her smile never wavers in the face of adversity and she has the most organized 2- and 3-year-old class I've ever seen.



## WHAT ISSUES DO YOU WANT TO RESOLVE IN EDUCATION? -----

**Diamond:** I want to resolve the disparity of resources available to students who are reentering schools from detention centers in disadvantaged communities. Additionally, I want to resolve other inequities in literacy, representation, and support for students discovering their identity.

**Jazmin:** I aspire to help fix the lack of representation and equity seen in schools, specifically schools that are mainly populated with students of color. Moreover, I would like to increase the amount of resources students have access to, whether they be financially, academically, etc.

**Anna:** I want to help improve education for all students regardless of their disabilities.

**Monserrat:** I desire to help resolve the lack of advocates there are for those students who can't speak up for themselves. I also want to help improve teacher training. Lack of funding in teacher training and development can lead to teachers not being able to deliver their subject properly.

**Gianna:** An issue that I would like to help resolve in education is the lack of teachers. There are many schools that are using substitute teachers as full-time teachers in classrooms and this is not very beneficial for the children.

**Jayliah:** I want to resolve the lack of access to a quality education, which is something I believe should be provided to everyone and not determined by your societal status. Additionally, I would like to resolve the low amount of funding that is provided to school systems. This is causing schools to have to cut back on important components of students' education, such as developmentally appropriate activities and materials.

**Amrita:** I want to make education a more alluring field for people from all walks of life by making it a safer and more supported profession. Students learn best from educators who feel comfortable in their positions. No educator should have to go to work worried if they will make it to the next school year.





## WHY DO YOU WANT TO TEACH?

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**Diamond:** Teachers are advocates for their students, and for many students, teachers are their only role model. It's an impactful and demanding role to take on since teachers are the people in our lives who help us discover who we are, and cultivate the hearts of the future leaders and changemakers.

**Jazmin:** I have seen the immense impact education has on the lives of students, and it is a dream of mine to be a part of it. For some students, school has provided them with a supporting and safe community. For others, school has allowed them to achieve success beyond whatever limitations have been placed on them.

**Anna:** I want to teach to help shape our future leaders and ensure all students are receiving a quality education.

**Montserrat:** Growing up, I never really had teachers that made a welcoming learning environment for me, but I want to be the teacher that creates that environment for my students. Others should consider teaching because the feeling of making a difference in children's lives is like no other.

**Gianna:** I want to help impact the lives of children in a positive way, and provide a place where students feel like they can express themselves and learn. I don't think of teaching as a job, I think of it as something fun. As Judy Bloom once said, "Our fingerprints don't fade from the lives we touch."

**Jayliah:** Teaching will give me the opportunity to help students become confident in themselves and their abilities. Growing up, my teachers focused a lot on what I couldn't do, and I want to show my students how to use what they can do to their benefit. Teaching gives you the opportunity to inspire and instill greatness in the next generation.

**Amrita:** Being an educator is a role where you develop the future—regardless of what it may look like. There is no other field where you can have such a personal relationship with the future, to the extent where the actions you take decide the world's fate. Personally, I've always loved teaching and couldn't see myself doing anything else.





## STUDENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The September student leadership training was the first time that the team met each other, and it was a great opportunity to interact and build on our teamwork skills. We learned about each other's strengths and weaknesses and how we could use them to achieve a common goal. We completed various team-building activities that we were guided through by members of TCNJ's student leadership organization. The first activity involved dividing into groups and creating a skit based on a genre given to us, with one person as the narrator and the rest as actors. Once each group prepared their skit, we performed it, and the other groups had to guess what genre was from the story. This activity gave us an insight into who was more comfortable speaking on the spot and helped us show each other our creative abilities.



We also competed to see which group could make the tallest tower with only paper and tape. In the groups, we brainstormed and listened to each other's ideas. This activity helped show us that there is more than one way to solve a problem. Each group was working towards the same goal, but we all had different approaches to solving it. Other activities included filling out a survey to find out what our leadership styles were and narrowing down what we thought were the most important aspects of a good leader. At the end of our training, we discussed and decided on which student leader would take on which position in the team.



# NJFEA Conference Fall 2023

William Paterson University



## Upcoming NJFEA Conferences

Rider University:

Wednesday, March 13

Rowan College of South Jersey - Gloucester

Tuesday, May 21



The CFE team was excited to start the year at William Paterson University for our NJFEA fall conference! Students from 14 NJ schools got to participate in various activities including a keynote presentation, a variety of breakout sessions, and a preservice panel Q&A. NJFEA Secretary Anna Anikiej gave a speech about why she wanted to be an educator. Keynote speaker Jean Clervil shared his journey as an author, motivational speaker, and entrepreneur, and engaged future educators in how they can discover and develop their gifts. The breakout sessions included topics about the college application process, literacy, and elementary education.





# NJFEA Conference Fall 2023

## William Paterson University

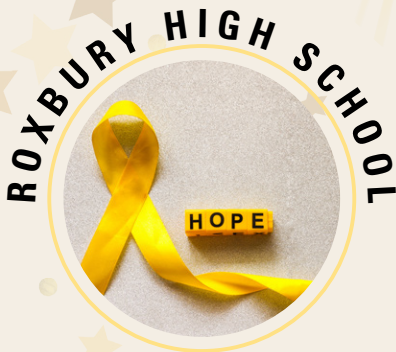
In the second half of the day, students participated in a love note activity where they were able to leave “thank-you” comments on large sticky notes for their breakout session presenters. Following this, Monserrat Gutierrez Bautista, NJFEA Communications Officer, moderated a panel interview. The preservice panel included current students from The College of New Jersey and William Paterson University’s education programs. These college students introduced attendees to the different path each of them took that led them towards education and their unique experiences in the academic field so far. We thank everyone who attended the conference and hope to see even more faces at our upcoming events!







## CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS



Our chapter is preparing an anti-bullying presentation for the middle school. We are also supporting Rox-THON, a club held at Roxbury High School that holds a dance marathon to help raise money for pediatric cancer. For more information, check out [rhsroxthon.weebly.com](http://rhsroxthon.weebly.com)

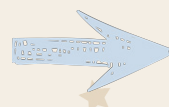


For Hispanic Heritage Month, we created informative posters that covered different Hispanic cultures, including their traditions, instruments, and food. Additionally, students created their own version of a Mexican craft called *papel picado*. Currently, students are working on planning a fundraising event called Parents' Night Out. In this event, children from across the county will be able to come to the campus and partake in many festive activities.



We recently had an election for the different leadership positions within our chapter. We also hosted our first annual Trunk-or-Treat for over 40 children from the on-campus Head Start program and our school community. Our members played a crucial role in promoting the event, decorating the cars, handing out candy, and creating games for the children to play.

Want to share what your NJFEA chapter has been up to? Submit a Chapter Highlight!



**Chapter Highlight Form**

[tinyurl.com/2d7s7t7a](http://tinyurl.com/2d7s7t7a)



# Current Issues in Education

## The Virtual SAT

According to College Board, the SAT is one of the smartest ways to showcase your academic abilities. The SAT is a paper-and-pencil standardized test that usually takes up to three hours to complete, which has caused dissatisfaction among students. It was announced that the exam will become completely digital beginning Spring 2023. In some cases, it seems like a positive change; however, everything has its benefits and disadvantages.

The main aspect of taking the SAT virtually is the fact that it will not be a paper and pencil test. The time it takes to complete the test has been cut down by an hour. As such, the testing process becomes shorter and easier, which helps reduce exam fatigue. Additionally, the test now provides each student with a live timer to help with pacing. There is also an accommodation for approved students to pause their tests and take breaks as needed. Another important aspect is the time span it takes to receive scores. Typically, SAT scores are processed about two weeks after the initial test day. Moving forward, the scores will now be available just a few days after taking the test. These benefits create a more efficient process and an easier testing experience.

However, with every new innovation, there can be some disadvantages. There are new features with the virtual test, the most prominent one being adaptive questions. The test adapts to a student's ability based on how they are performing throughout the test. If you are doing well, then the questions get harder, and vice versa. This can become difficult for

students in two ways. First, students may experience frustration knowing the test is adaptive. If they don't sense the questions have gotten harder, their focus could possibly shift to whether they are truly doing well on the test, instead of completing questions to the best of their ability. Secondly, students will need to use devices compatible with Bluebook, the SAT virtual testing platform. If students do not have access to a device, they will have to borrow one from their testing site, which can be uncomfortable to adjust to if they are not familiar with the device.

In conclusion, the virtual SAT aims to be a less stressful experience for students with many more features and accommodations. It may not be every student's preference, but with study plans and practice tests, students can become more comfortable with the SAT's new format. Platforms such as Khan Academy and the Bluebook app are College Board's suggested platforms for digital practice and preparation.

### Sources:

College Board. "Digital SAT Brings Student-Friendly Changes to Test Experience." Newsroom, 25 Jan. 2022, [newsroom.collegeboard.org/digital-sat-brings-student-friendly-changes-test-experience](https://newsroom.collegeboard.org/digital-sat-brings-student-friendly-changes-test-experience).

Hess, Rick. "What the Digital SAT Will Mean for Students and Educators (Opinion)." Education Week, Education Week, 1 Mar. 2022, [www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-what-the-digital-sat-will-mean-for-students-and-educators/2022/02](https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-what-the-digital-sat-will-mean-for-students-and-educators/2022/02).





# Resources



Check out the work that the nonprofit **Cultural Survival** does to support and advocate for Indigenous communities around the world.

Explore the **NEA's list** of lesson plans, books, and more to grow your knowledge of Indigenous Peoples' histories and cultures.

Watch this **TEDx talk**, in which an Indigenous student shares his experiences in the education system and his advice for students and educators.

Are you familiar with the current U.S. Secretary of Education, Michael Cardona? Read his **NAACP biography**.

Check out this **U.S. Census article** covering trends in educational attainment among Hispanic populations.

Take a **virtual tour** of the Smithsonian's exhibit *¡Presente! A Latino History of the United States*.



Dr. Jeanne DeColle  
Executive Director



Wambui Gilbert  
Program Assistant

## About the Center for Future Educators

The Center for Educators (CFE) was established at The College of New Jersey in 2011 as a collaboration between the New Jersey Education Association and The College of New Jersey to launch a new vision for statewide leadership in the identification, selection, and grooming of prospective future teachers, and to serve as an exemplary national model of future teacher development and recruitment.

The CFE was established to inspire, encourage, and recruit high school and middle school students who are considering teaching as a future career. The CFE especially seeks future educators interested in teaching in high poverty and hard-to-staff schools and/or high shortage subject areas such as math, science, special education, world languages, technology, bilingual and ESL. The Center believes that New Jersey's students are entitled to have the best, highly trained teachers that reflect the demographics of the state and promote academic progress and social skill development. The CFE works collaboratively with schools, institutions, and agencies across New Jersey to develop exemplary models of future teacher recruitment.

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