

WINTER 2024

# 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.

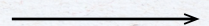
# From the Executive Director's Desk

Dear Friends of the CFE,

Now that the days are getting longer and the first hints of color are popping up in gardens, it is a good time to reflect on the dark days of winter and evaluate our progress. Recently, I have had the good fortune to represent the work of the CFE as a member of various working groups and committees dealing with teacher shortages and efforts to diversify the profession. The bad news is that there is no quick fix to the problem, but the good news is that people are evaluating data, making suggestions, and collaborating on ideas about how to move forward. It is easy to complain about a problem, but it takes time and work to think through solutions that are meaningful and achievable. We know that if we want to address teacher shortages, one thing we can do is introduce the profession as a viable option before students get to college. The CFE continues to work towards the goal of ensuring that there are opportunities for students to pursue an education pathway in every high school in NJ, whether in the form of a club or course.

Speaking of ideas and collaboration, the NJFEA Advisory Board, a group comprised of 23 members (NJFEA advisors, student leaders, and representatives from higher education, the NJEA, and the NJDOE) met to discuss the work of the CFE and make recommendations to ensure that our work is relevant and impactful as we continue to grow. As a result of their input, there have been a few changes, including gender inclusive language in the NJFEA constitution and bylaws, the permanent addition of student leadership positions, and the ability for colleges and universities to form NJFEA clubs for local high school students who may be on their campus taking classes. We also got feedback on NJFEA programming, which will help us plan as we move forward. Thank you to everyone who took the time to help us get better at recruiting future educators.

As I reflect on the great things going on in NJFEA clubs across the state, I am reminded that growth does not happen until we are willing to step out of our comfort zone and try something new. Some of our greatest life lessons come from when we stumble and don't get things right the first time. Over the last few years, I have seen a growing number of students who are scared to try something new because they might fail. The anxiety paralyzes them and keeps them from meeting people, trying new things, or making independent decisions. A friend told me a story of a mom who took her daughter out for coffee, but when they were in the drive-through, the daughter asked the mom to order for her because she was afraid of messing up. Recognizing that this was a big problem, the mom pulled over and let the daughter go in and order her drink by herself so she could try it without anyone seeing her.



## From the Executive Director's Desk (continued)

As expected, the daughter came back with her drink and a look of relief. In order to continue to build self-confidence, the mom proceeded to take the daughter out several more times in the coming months so she could practice making decisions and placing orders. The moral of the story is that you can't learn to do something if you never try. It takes practice to get things right. What kind of message does it send to future students if they believe they have to be perfect all the time and watch the adults in their lives get mad, blame others, or fail to admit when they have made mistakes? That is just a wounded ego. We all have to learn how to fail with grace and give grace to others when they make a mistake rather than humiliate and tease. Failing at something does not make you a failure, giving up does. Some of my best teachers were those who admitted when they made mistakes and made their classrooms comfortable places for students to grow. Sometimes, the greatest example we can set for others is by not being perfect, owning up to our mistakes, and trying again. As our days get longer and the flowers start to bloom, think about how you encourage others to grow.

Yours in learning,

*Jeanna DeColle, Ph.D.*



# NJFEA Conference Winter 2024

## Drew University



The CFE team had an amazing time welcoming 14 schools across New Jersey to Drew University for the NJFEA Winter Conference. We introduced the day with student leaders Jazmin-Adriana Vargas, Diamond Previlon, and Amrita Subedar. The 2024 NJ State Teacher of the Year, Joseph Nappi, shared his journey as a student and an educator through an interactive presentation. Then, students got to experience parts of Drew's campus as they travelled to their breakout sessions. The sessions covered a myriad of topics; from linguistics and theatre to psychology and even an escape room! Regardless of the interest, there was a breakout session for everyone.



# NJFEA Conference Winter 2024

## Drew University

After the second session, participants headed to the campus dining hall for lunch and enjoyed the different options available. After, CFE Ambassador Gianna Stipelkovich shared why she wants to be an educator. Students then got a first look at a captivating new video promoting the Future Educators Academy. NJFEA Communications Officer Monserrat Gutierrez Bautista moderated the preservice panel, where current students from Drew University shared their experiences as college students and educators-in-training. The conference ended with students leaving thank-you notes to their breakout session presenters and participants began their journeys back to school. We hope everyone got to learn something new and enjoyed meeting fellow future educators. Looking forward to seeing you all again soon!



## Upcoming NJFEA Conference

Rowan College of  
South Jersey -  
Gloucester:

Tuesday, May 21



# NJFEA SERVICE PROJECT 2024



*Brought to you by the CFE Student Leadership Team*

## SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

As the end of the school year approaches, school supplies begin to run out and are in desperate need of replacement. However, there are children who lack access to new school supplies, and they deserve to enjoy the rest of the school year without worrying about procuring these items themselves.

### COLLECTION ITEMS

- Pencils
- Markers
- Erasers
- Crayons
- Notebooks
- Folders
- Glue
- Paint
- Accepted donations should be **new & unopened**. After collection, chapters should pack and donate them to schools in need around their community.

## GUIDELINES FOR BOTH DRIVES

- Set aside time during chapter meetings to organize and check the quality of the donations.
- Address the unique needs of the local school and/or organization that will be receiving the donations. Do they need more of some items than others?

## SUGGESTED DATES FOR BOTH DRIVES

**Collection date range:**  
MARCH 15–APRIL 15

**Distribution date range:**  
APRIL 5–MAY 1

## CLOTHING & BABY ITEMS DRIVE

Foster carers are generally underfunded and can't afford to provide a wide range of clothing, accessories, and/or supplies to their foster children. NJFEA chapters can help by collecting donations from their school or community to go toward a foster care organization of the chapter's choice.

### COLLECTION ITEMS

- Clothing and accessories for men, women, children, and infants
- Baby care items, such as:
  - Diapers
  - Wipes
  - Formula
  - Baby food
  - Bottles
  - Pacifiers
  - Breast pumps

## ORGANIZATION EXAMPLES

- CASA - Bridgeton, Cedar Knolls, Elizabeth, Ewing, Hackensack, Jersey City, Lebanon, Mount Holly, Newark, New Brunswick, Oakhurst, Somers Point, Toms River, Wayne
- Embrella - Princeton
- New Jersey Angels - Jackson
- The Children's Home Society - Trenton
- The Village of Children and Families - Point Pleasant

**NOTE:** Before collecting donations, **first check** with the donation site for their quality standards for items (e.g., new and/or gently used)



# NJFEA SERVICE PROJECT 2024



*Brought to you by the CFE Student Leadership Team*

## VOLUNTEER TUTORING

Tutoring is an opportunity to put your skills to use in helping others to understand new concepts and information. It's also a great addition to traditional education, or in place of it, when formal education is not accessible. For communities affected by war, tutoring can make a big difference in supporting students' learning as they confront new challenges.



### WHAT IS TUTORPEERS?

Tutorpeers is a peer-to-peer online platform where students can learn together. Volunteers can connect with other students and tutor them on a subject of their choice. This website accepts tutors and learners from ages 13-18. Volunteers are also able to customize their schedules.

#### Learn More:

<https://tutorpeers.com/volunteer-for-ukraine/>

### HOW DO WE GET SET UP?

1. Sign Up:  
<https://app.tutorpeers.com/auth/register>
2. Make your profile attractive
3. Set up your calendar
4. Set tutoring charge to **free**
5. Begin tutoring!

**GET STARTED!**

### SUGGESTED TUTORING MILESTONES

**Profile setup deadline:**

**MARCH 25**

**Complete at least 1 hour per tutor:**

**APRIL 15**

**Challenge!** Can your chapter complete 15 hours of volunteer tutoring?

### SHARE YOUR WORK!

Submit a Chapter Highlight ([tinyurl.com/2d7s7t7a](https://tinyurl.com/2d7s7t7a)) with details about your chapter and service project. Send photos or videos of your chapter activities to [cfe@tcnj.edu](mailto:cfe@tcnj.edu)!



CENTER FOR  
FUTURE EDUCATORS AT  
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

# FUTURE EDUCATORS ACADEMY

JULY 20–27 | THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

The Future Educators Academy is a week-long, social justice-focused program for high school sophomores and juniors (rising juniors and seniors) from NJ public schools interested in exploring careers in education.

## HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

- Individual and group learning experiences
- Insight and instruction from education professionals
- Field trips to local communities and institutions
- Practical application of new concepts and ideas



**APPLY:** [tinyurl.com/yc2sb8cy](https://tinyurl.com/yc2sb8cy)

**APPLICATION  
DUE MARCH 29!**



## ADMISSIONS & REQUIREMENTS

This program aims to recruit students from marginalized and underrepresented groups, although any student from an NJ public high school may apply. Selection is based on a personal essay, teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, and academic performance. Applicants may also be interviewed. These virtual interviews will take place during April–early May.

Admission to the academy is competitive, as spaces are limited. Accepted participants will be required to complete pre-assignments, a portfolio of work, and written reflections.

There is no cost to attend, and meals and on-campus accommodation will be provided by CFE.



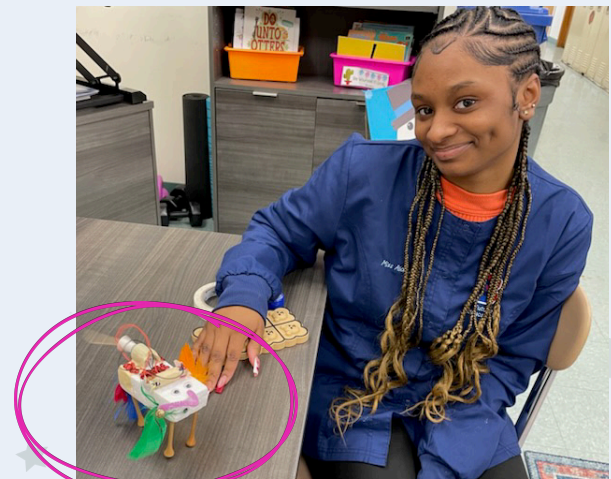
# CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS



During the holidays season, Boonton High School's NJFEA chapter collected toys for local families in need.



Dr. DelColle visited the NJFEA chapter at BCIT, which includes several graduates from the 2023 Future Educators Academy, and students were guided through this year's Academy application process. Special guest appearance: a fan favorite creation from last program's STEM lesson!

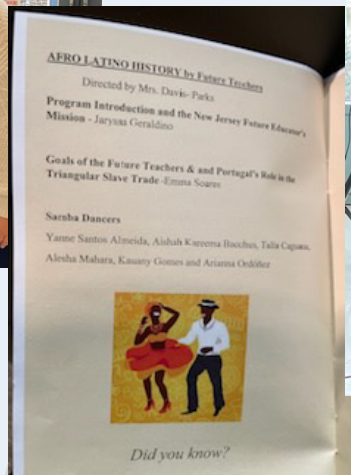


# CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

SCIENCE PARK HIGH SCHOOL



Dr. DelColle visited Science Park's chapter for their Black History Month Program. After an enthusiastic crowd joined the choir in Lift Every Voice and Sing, guests were treated to Afro-Latino history, music, dance, and spoken word selections, shared and performed by students from across the school. The NJFEA club members did a wonderful job talking about the history and contributions of Afro-Latinos under the guidance of their fearless leader. Sra. Davis-Parks who will be retiring at the end of the year. As her last Black History Month program, Sra. Davis-Parks went out with a bang and stole the show when she left the stage escorted by her NJFEA members to a lively salsa. Dr. DelColle thanks the Science Park NJFEA chapter again for including her in the special day!



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



**Chapter Highlight Form**

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

# Current Issues in Education

Note: The following topics are selected, researched, and written by CFE's Student Leadership Team. The content may not reflect the views or opinions of the Center for Future Educators or The College of New Jersey.

## Lucy Calkins' Literacy Method

Lucy Calkins is a professor at the Teachers College of Columbia University who is widely known for her reading curriculum, the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In years past, “as many as 1 in 4 U.S. elementary schools used Calkins’ signature curriculum” (Hurley, 2023). Calkins created this curriculum in hopes of fostering a love for reading within all students. Her philosophy and methods were founded on the belief that children can naturally learn to read through exposure to literature, along with plenty of time to practice independently.

The most prominent characteristic of her curriculum is an emphasis on teaching students to anticipate word structures using context clues and illustrations provided in practice books. This is divergent from traditional literacy instruction that often emphasizes phonics when teaching children how to read. The Reading and Writing Workshop garnered extreme popularity in the educational field, and her curriculum was praised and trusted for four decades, until controversy and concerns surrounding its efficiency began to arise.

Recent data indicates that the instructional approaches employed in Reading and Writing Workshops have resulted in subpar literacy proficiency nationwide. According to University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Mark Seidenberg, “fewer than half of 4th and 8th graders in the nationally-representative sample read above a basic level”, a trend mirrored in the latest data from the PISA, a prominent international reading assessment. In other words, the supposedly innovative method of learning to read through context clues and exposure has had adverse effects on the short- and long-term literacy development of countless children.

Moreover, the methods advocated by Lucy Calkins have exacerbated an already significant racial gap. A February 2023 report from The City highlights that more than “two-thirds of white and Asian American students are considered proficient, but fewer than 37% of Black and Latino children are” (Zimmerman and Gonen). In essence, Lucy Calkins’ strategies have further compromised literacy proficiency rates for students who were already falling behind their white counterparts. In summary, the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project has proven to be not only inefficient but also detrimental to the student body in America as a whole.



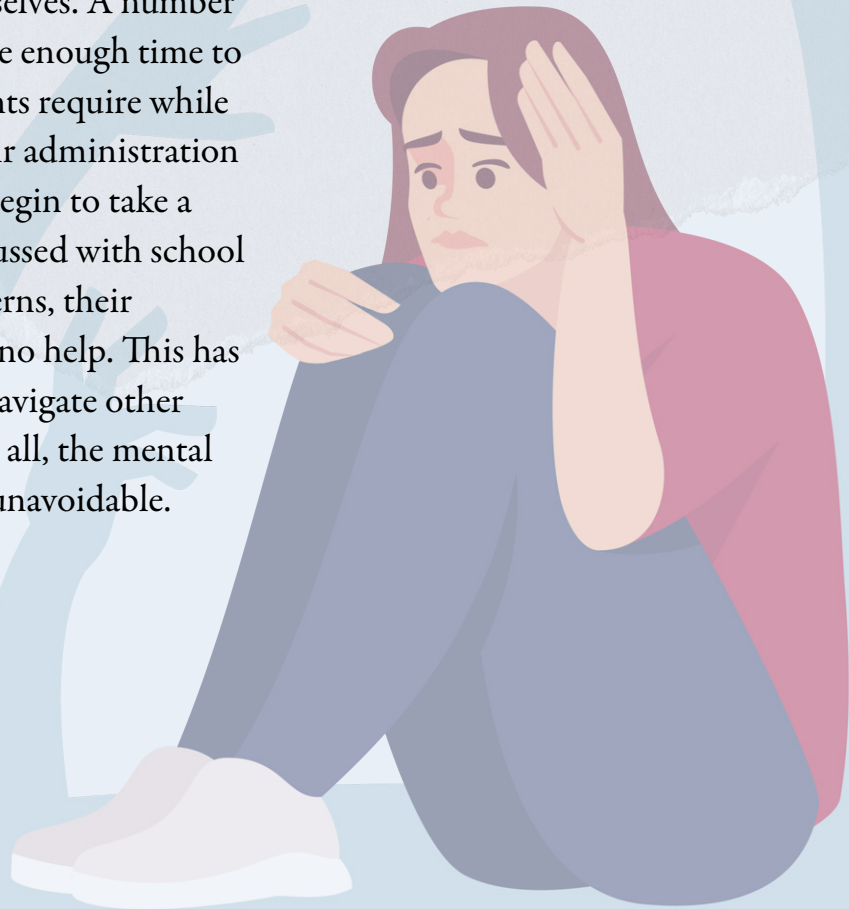
# Current Issues in Education

## Mental Health Trends in Students and Teachers

In education, there has been an increase in anxiety and depression in students and teachers. The focus on mental health has become more prominent after the COVID-19 pandemic and worldwide lockdown. “Anxiety problems, behavior problems, and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children” (CDC, 2023). Out of this age range, 9.4% experienced anxiety, 8.9% experienced behavior problems, and 4.4% experienced depression. Of those 4.4%, 15.1% had a major depressive episode and 36.7% had persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness. There are many different causes for these mental health issues. The most commonly known include genetics, trauma, and environmental factors.

Many educators are feeling similar to their students due to the rise in pressure that their jobs require. Teachers have to help students adjust while also having to navigate challenges themselves. A number of teachers feel like they do not have enough time to complete the tasks that their students require while also meeting the standards that their administration has set, and so the responsibilities begin to take a toll. These concerns have been discussed with school districts and despite teachers’ concerns, their administration provides limited or no help. This has caused a lot of teachers to have to navigate other ways to solve their problems, but in all, the mental health effects have become almost unavoidable.

Students likewise feel overwhelmed by the tasks that are expected from them, which include learning large amounts of information, completing assignments and assessments, and maintaining good grades throughout their education. The concept of expectation versus reality has become the most likely cause of the constant feelings of being overwhelmed. In summary, teachers and students have become consumed with high workloads and expectations, along with feeling unheard and ignored in many ways, which have contributed to decreases in mental health.



# Current Issues in Education

## Bonus Issue Highlight

### Governor Murphy Signs Bipartisan Legislation Promoting Civic Engagement Among Students

Check out the NJ.gov article here: [tinyurl.com/4uwws4c5](https://www.nj.gov/4uwws4c5)

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# Resources



Watch this **YouTube video**, presented by Stanford professor Michael Hines, that covers the origins of Black History Month.

Explore the National Park Service's **mini biographies** of women who championed social justice and civic engagement through conservation.

This **podcast episode** of the NEH's series, *BackStory*, highlights the efforts made towards equality in sports and how they coincided with civil rights and women's rights movements.

Listen to this **episode** from the NEA's podcast series, *School Me*, which covers ways that Black history lessons can be delivered more meaningfully.

Check out this Learning for Justice **article** highlighting ways educators can continue to incorporate Black histories, experiences, and contributions year round.

Check out Melanie Flores' **TEDx talk**, *How to Win Girls' Hearts with STEM Education*.



Dr. Jeanne DelColle  
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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