

New Jersey Education Association

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Encouraging the next generation

NJFEA launches “Sponsor a Future Teacher”

Written by Larry Fieber



“I want to be a teacher!”

Chances are you’ve heard this proclamation from a student or two. Now there’s a way you can help youngsters learn more about the profession before they head off to college.

NJEA members are invited to encourage and recruit the next generation of teachers by participating in “**Sponsor a Future Teacher**,” a new initiative being launched this fall. This program reaches out to current high school and middle school students who are considering careers as future teachers. “Sponsor a Future Teacher” is being coordinated by the New Jersey Future Educators Association (NJFEA), which is funded by NJEA.

NJFEA was started two years ago to elevate the image of teaching and promote it as a challenging and rewarding career. NJFEA recognizes the need for future teachers, particularly in high shortage subjects such as math, science, technology, special education, and English as a Second Language. NJFEA also seeks future teachers for high poverty, hard-to staff schools as well as students who represent diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

There are currently 70 local high school and middle school NJFEA chapters in the state where students network and engage in activities focused on teaching. Several chapters are embedded as part of a Tomorrow’s Teachers elective course currently offered in multiple New Jersey high schools for juniors and seniors. Other NJFEA chapters meet as co-curricular after-school clubs. Our goal is to have 100 active chapters in place by the end of

the 2012-13 school year.

"NJEA is happy to partner with the New Jersey Future Educators Association because our mission is to advocate for the future of the profession and for the future of public education," said NJEA Vice President Wendell Steinhauer. "I encourage active NJEA members to take advantage of this program and join the effort to prepare the next generation of great teachers."

NJFEA is part of a national network of state organizations that are affiliated with the Future Educators Association, overseen by Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), a professional association for educators in Bloomington, Indiana. NJFEA is governed by its own constitution with elected student officers who represent every region of New Jersey.

Amy Spina, a June 2012 graduate of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South in Princeton Junction who served as an NJFEA secretary during the 2011-12 school year, said that NJFEA solidified her decision to become an elementary teacher. Spina will matriculate as a freshman this fall at the University of Rhode Island where she will participate in JumpStart, a special program that works with underprivileged children.

Other NJFEA programs

In addition to supporting local chapter activities, NJFEA sponsors several statewide programs. Many NJFEA high school students participate in summer Urban Teacher Academy programs offered by The College of New Jersey, Rider University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, William Paterson University, Kean University, and Rowan University. These programs introduce participants to the rewards and challenges of teaching. Students take field trips to schools and community agencies, attend lectures with distinguished professors and teachers, and teach mini-lessons in math, science, and physical education to elementary school children.

NJFEA sponsors an annual fall conference for future teachers. This year's conference will be held at The College of New Jersey on Tuesday, Oct. 30. Over 600 future teachers and their NJFEA advisers from more than 50 high schools have registered for this event.

The NJFEA Conference will feature 34 break-out sessions on a wide range of topics. Jeanne DeColle, the 2011-12 New Jersey Teacher of the Year, will be the keynote speaker. Students will have opportunities to meet each other and learn about their respective chapter activities.

Regional NJFEA programs for high school and middle school students, student leadership trainings, and state and local service projects are being planned for this school year. In addition, NJFEA members will have a booth where they will disseminate information for future teachers at the NJEA Convention in Atlantic City on November 9.

NJFEA members receive a subscription to *Go Teach*, the national FEA magazine. NJFEA officers and chapter members plan to attend the national FEA Conference in April 2013 in Orlando, Florida, where they will seek national student offices and compete in national competitions.

NJFEA annually sponsors two achievement awards for students who provide outstanding leadership and contributions to their local chapters. NJFEA members also gain recognition for academic achievements through the national FEA Honor Society. Students are additionally eligible for Prospective Educator Scholarships sponsored by PDK International. Additional information about NJFEA's programs and activities can be found at www.tcnj.edu/futureeducators.

Our goal is to have NJFEA become one of our nation's most effective future teacher networks. In every school I visit, I meet so many students who want become educators. Their interest and enthusiasm for teaching is electrifying, and NJFEA provides wonderful opportunities for our future teachers to meet and learn from each other as they explore their career goals.

Larry Fieber is the executive director of the Center for Future Educators at The College of New Jersey State and state director of NJFEA. Contact Fieber at fieber@tcnj.edu.

- **How can you “Sponsor a Future Teacher”?**

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How can you sponsor a future educator?

- Encourage students in your community to join their local NJFEA high school or middle school chapters
- Sponsor a future teacher for a chapter or individual membership in NJFEA for \$8. Membership/chapter information is available at www.futureeducators.org/join/join.htm.
- Urge your local high school or middle school to start an FEA/NJFEA chapter. The start-up costs for a chapter is \$125. As an incentive, NJFEA will cover the \$125 start-up cost for the first 15 new chapters that join by December 2012.
- Print copies of the [“Sponsor a Future Teacher” flier](#).
- Contact Mr. Larry Fieber, state director of NJFEA, at 609-771-2464 or fieber@tcnj.edu for more information about “Sponsor a Future Teacher” and NJFEA programs.

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