



## ✓ SOME FACTS ABOUT PAC

***PAC is power!*** NJEA PAC provides us with the power to shape our profession, protect our benefits, and promote public education. All NJEA PAC funds are raised from the voluntary contributions of our members. Therefore, it is up to you to turn on the power!

*The following are some commonly asked questions and answers about NJEA PAC. Look them over and then join your colleagues across New Jersey in supporting NJEA PAC.*

### **What is NJEA PAC?**

NJEA PAC is the New Jersey Education Association Political Action Committee. It is a legal mechanism through which our Association provides financial support to political candidates for elective office.

### **How is NJEA PAC organized?**

A board of trustees, composed of NJEA's officers and NJEA's Executive Committee oversees the total operation of the NJEA PAC program. The board of trustees is responsible for ensuring that NJEA PAC meets its legal obligations and administrative responsibilities.

There is also an NJEA PAC Operating Committee. Members of the Operating Committee include NJEA's officers, Executive, Government Relations and Congressional Contact Committees, county association presidents, and representatives of active support staff, Student NJEA, and the NJREA. The purpose of the Operating Committee is to screen and endorse candidates, raise funds, and develop support for endorsed candidates.

### **How does NJEA PAC choose which candidates it will support?**

Candidates, individual NJEA or NJREA members, county or local associations, or political parties may submit a written request for endorsement to NJEA PAC. These requests for endorsement are processed at the county level by screening committees comprised of NJEA and NJREA members. The screening committees make recommendations to the NJEA PAC Operating Committee. The NJEA PAC Operating Committee considers these recommendations and chooses which candidates to support.

### **What type of information does NJEA PAC consider when reviewing candidates for endorsement?**

Candidates are selected on a strictly nonpartisan basis. Candidates are asked to complete questionnaires or submit information regarding their positions on issues of importance to public education. This information is forwarded to county screening committees which conduct interviews of interested candidates to further explore their ideas about public education and to assess their electability.

### **Do I have a voice in selecting candidates?**

You have direct input through your local and county leaders, NJEA PAC Board of Trustees, and your representatives serving on the NJEA PAC Operating Committee. In fact, they count on you for information about local issues, the political climate in your area, and your assessment of local attitudes.

### **What does an NJEA PAC endorsement mean to a candidate?**

NJEA PAC will often provide endorsed candidates with a financial contribution that is within the limits set by law. NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates also receive publicity in NJEA publications. Most importantly, candidates covet an NJEA PAC endorsement because they know our members spend countless hours of their spare time volunteering on the campaigns of NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates.

### **What does an NJEA PAC endorsement mean to our Association?**

An NJEA PAC endorsement indicates that our Association has determined that a candidate has an interest in public education and is open to considering the views and concerns of NJEA members. An NJEA PAC endorsement does not mean that a candidate does or will support all of NJEA's positions.

### **Why does our Association need NJEA PAC?**

Our Association needs NJEA PAC to elect supporters of public education. NJEA PAC also provides us with an opportunity to bring the issues to the candidates and help them understand the concerns of public school staff. Our ability to support proven or potential friends of public education has helped us to build the relationships we need to advance our agenda. These relationships make our Association a major player in the legislature.

### **Where do NJEA PAC funds come from?**

NJEA PAC funds come solely from the voluntary contributions of our members. NJEA does not use dues money for political contributions to candidates. NJEA PAC is successful, therefore, because of your commitment to public education advocacy. NJEA PAC is your voluntary voice!

### **How will my NJEA PAC contribution be used?**

Unless you indicate otherwise, 70% of your contribution to NJEA PAC will be used to help elect supporters of public education in New Jersey. The remaining 30% will be distributed to The NEA Fund for Children and Education to help elect friends of education at the federal level. Just as you may contribute any amount you wish, you may also change the distribution between NJEA PAC and The NEA Fund for Children and Education.



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## WHY SHOULD YOU GIVE TO PAC?

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### *NJEA PAC helps Elect People Who Support our Work!*

- The people we elect make decisions that affect the professional lives of all school employees, regardless of position or job title.
- Freeholders, Congress, the state Legislature, the governor – all have the power to make decisions that influence us.
- Elected officials play a role in appointing other decision-makers who have an equal impact on our professional lives, such as the members of the State Board of Education, the commissioner of education, and justices in the courts.

#### **ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS IMPACT YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE:**

- Your **salary** is determined by your local board of education through the collective bargaining process.
- Your **district's funding** is determined by many. The Legislature passed a school funding law, the governor and Legislature pass an annual budget, the commissioner oversees the distribution of funds to districts, the Courts determined Abbott funding, Congress gives money to states, and if you work in a vocational school or an educational services district, county freeholders appropriate county funds for your district.
- Your **school district budget** is decided by your local board of education, within parameters approved by the State Board of Education and overseen by the commissioner.
- **Certification** standards are decided by the Legislature and the State Board of Education.
- The **amount of leave you get** (sick/vacation/personal days/family leave/medical leave) is decided by the Legislature, which has passed laws on minimum sick days and family/medical leave; Congress, which has passed laws on family/medical leave; and your local board of education through the collective bargaining process.
- **Due process (tenure) rights** are decided by the Legislature, and possibly by local boards of education (not all positions get tenure, but some can be bargained.)

- **Pension benefits** are decided by the Legislature.
- The **age you can retire** is decided by the Legislature.
- Your **medical coverage in retirement** is decided by the Legislature and is sometimes bargained with your local board of education.
- **Evaluation policies** – who does it, how often, and consequences – are established by the Legislature and the State Board. Your local board sets policies too – especially for ESP members.
- **Qualifications for your job** can be determined by the Legislature, the State Board, your local board, and even Congress. Some instructional paraprofessionals need to be highly qualified, as do teachers.
- **Professional development** requirements are set by the Legislature, the State Board, and your local board of education.
- **The ratio of custodians/square feet** for a district to be spending its money efficiently is actually governed by the state. The Legislature passed a law to require school district efficiencies. The State Board approved a number of square feet to be efficient, and the commissioner oversees districts' implementation of this regulation. The same regulation governs the fiscal efficiency of a school's food service.

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*Now that you see the power of elected officials, it's time to make sure we have a say in who gets elected.*

*A voluntary contribution to NJEA PAC helps you have that say.*

