Thoughts from the President...Emil Ferlicchi

There can be no doubt that we are all living in challenging times. What with the current state of affairs within our nation, state, county and township itself, no one is insulated from the effects of rising costs of food, fuel, taxes, pension and health care contributions, the possibility of losing ones job etc. It is with these concerns and others that we are extremely motivated towards securing the best possible contract in as timely a manner as possible. As your president, I want to reaffirm my pledge to every ETEA member to continue to focus my energies on the negotiations process and assure you of my continued commitment to that end.

You continue to work without a contract. You continue to show your dedication and hard work doing your jobs in an exemplary fashion, “always caring” for those we serve, the students, of the Edison Public Schools!

As difficult as these times may be, we as an association MUST REMAIN POSITIVE in our outlook and UNITED in our resolve to stand together ETEA STRONG under all circumstances. I want to personally extend my thanks to all members of this organization for your patience as we continue to work towards our goal of reaching a fair and equitable contract agreement with the Board of Education.

We have had many obstacles to contend with while engaged in the bargaining process. The current environment for negotiations presents far different circumstances that did not exist years ago. Besides the economic factors we are faced with, there’s been legislation limiting funding available for contracts, imposed contributions to our health care benefits thru legislation and increased pension contributions. In addition, we have a Board of Ed committed to limiting tax increases by capping and/or reducing employee costs. These and other factors are playing a serious role as we continue to engage the board in contract talks.

I’ve seen glimmers of hope during our discussions of salary and continue to remain cautiously optimistic at our ability to arrive at a fair and reasonable settlement in the near future. I do believe that the best settlement is one that is arrived at between the parties and not by an outside agency. I get a sense the Board feels much the same way.

So I ask you, every member of ETEA to continue to STAND STRONG, STAND UNITED, STAND BEHIND YOUR NEGOTIATING TEAMS AND TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
High School News

What an honor it was! Rutgers University selected six outstanding high school bands to perform at its 2012 Mid-Atlantic Wind Band Festival, an event that recognized the premier groups from throughout the region on February 16th and 17th at the university’s Nicholas Performing Arts Center. And, believe it or not, two of the six bands were from Edison, from our two high schools--Edison High and J.P. Stevens!

The JP Stevens Model United Nations went to Harvard this weekend to compete and came away with the 'Best Large Delegation' honors. They defeated a team that was ranked #3 in the Nation! Mr. Anthony White is the teacher who is in charge of the JP Stevens M.U.N and he entered them in this competition to see how the students would measure up to those high schools who have obtained National recognition. Congratulations to Mr. White and the students from JP Stevens for an excellent showing.

On Wednesday, January 25th Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan visited John Adams. He was invited to participate in NJEA's "Teacher for a Day" program. Fortunately for us he agreed to come and teach an 8th grade civics class. Ms. Wenzel and Mrs. Meile combined classes and he addressed a group of 27 students. The lesson consisted of a review of how state and local politics compare with the federal government, how bills become laws, the committees and bills that the legislator is currently working on, as well as why it is necessary for everyone in Congress to work together. The students were actively engaged and very appreciative of this VIP visit.

John Adams Special Visitor
In the beginning of February, the Herbert Hoover Student Council conducted a Teens for Jeans Drive to collect jeans for the homeless. They encouraged participation from the students by showing a video clip during lunch and advertising with posters and banners throughout the building. In a short amount of time, the school was able to collect over 300 pairs of jeans. The jeans were brought to Aeropostale, a clothing store in Menlo Mall, which hosts this project, and will soon be distributed to homeless teens and families throughout the country.

**Herbert Hoover**

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**READ ACROSS AMERICA**

**Woodbrook School**

**Benjamin Franklin School**

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**Washington**

We have had a very busy year with many changes but it has been a very successful year so far! The year started with a lovely tree ceremony in dedication of Mrs. Griffin-Ussak for her years of service to Washington School. Kristen Glus, our PE teacher, ran a very successful Jump for Heart event. Our students rose over $2000 for this very important cause. We recently received our C.A.R.E. plaque at the February 27th Board Meeting. It is the third year in row! We collected over $5000 for this great organization. The students of Washington have enjoyed our Washington Reader program where members of the board, administration, parents, and retired teachers come and read to their classes throughout the school year. In April, we will be welcoming a new beautiful sign. All in all, it has been a great year at Washington!
Classroom Good News

The Primary MD class is rolling through Menlo Park School with two colorful wagons chock full of treats! My classroom has joined CARE representatives, Elizabeth Conway, Edna Santiago, Janine Fekete, and Cathy Cadmus to fundraise for this generous organization which assists families in need.

Each week the primary students decorate and fill snack bags. These simple brown bags are transformed into a bit of art and are filled with salty, chewy, and crunchy treats—ALL which meet the needs of our hard working staff members! Then, the bags are sold to our staff members.

What skills are we developing? Decorating skills! Sorting skills! Counting skills! Practicing hall safety and vocalizing our manners are just a few of the skills implemented every Tuesday afternoon! However, and most importantly, the students in the Primary MD class are meeting more friends, their buddy class continues to communicate effectively, staff members are learning the children’s names while welcoming them into their classrooms, and the school community is smiling while filling their bellies!

Room 4 could not do this alone! First, we thank the kind staff members who have generously offered to shop for tasty treats; next we thank our 4th grade buddies who are friendly students “caught” acting the right way and are found right in Mrs. Meirama and Mrs. Callahan’s classroom! Also, we thank Mrs. Carr’s 4th grade resource room as her students helped stuff the snack bags, and last we thank both of our speech therapists Mrs. Agosta and Mrs. Storer.

Allegra Greeley- PMD Special Educator @ Menlo Park School

John Marshall Kicks off Read Across America Week with a Celebration

John Marshall School held its 1st Annual Read Across America Kick-Off Celebration on Friday, February 24th. The entire school was in attendance in the gymnasium. The assembly was created because John Marshall was lucky enough to be selected to get a visit from “The Cat in the Hat” from NJEA. Mrs. Seybuck, the reading specialist, Ms. Olsen, the music teacher, and Mrs. Pellicane, the Read 180 teacher and assembly coordinator, worked collaboratively to create an assembly that involved song, narration, a reading oath, a reading contest and finally a visit from “The Cat in the Hat.” Ms. Olsen had practiced with all of the students on various reading and Dr. Seuss- themed songs. Students were seated in a horseshoe shape, so that all the students could see each other performing. Each pair of grade levels sang a different song to the other students, teachers, and guests. A group of 5th Grade students auditioned for the narrator roles. They memorized their scripts and performed beautifully. We were honored to have in attendance Dr. O’Malley and Mrs. Griffin-Ussak. Mrs. Griffin-Ussak spoke to the children about her own reading habits and the importance of reading. It was truly a celebration of reading and a great time was had by all.

At the closing of our assembly, each child was high-fived by “The Cat in the Hat.” A special thanks to Mrs. Hoffman, our acting principal, for all of her help and support.
CONGRATULATIONS

EDISON’S 2012 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Leonora Zektzer, Social Studies teacher – J.P. Stevens H.S.

Roni Schwarz, Special Ed teacher – Edison H.S.

Catherine Reiker, Art teacher – Thomas Jefferson M.S.

Christopher White, Science teacher – John Adams M.S.

Karen Maccaro, Special Ed teacher – Herbert Hoover M.S.

Michelle Kowaleski, Head Guidance Counselor – Woodrow Wilson M.S.

Michelle Barasch, Speech-Language Therapist, Lincoln Elementary School

Sejan Jain, 2nd Grade teacher – Washington Elementary School

Marge Huber, Guidance Counselor – James Madison Intermediate School

Judy Guzzi, Music teacher – Benjamin Franklin Elementary School

Kathleen Gluchowski, 1st Grade teacher – John Marshall Elementary School

Denise Adams, 3rd Grade teacher – Menlo Park Elementary School

Kim Duhamel, 5th Grade teacher – James Monroe Elementary School

Linda Tsirikos, 4th Grade Special Ed teacher – Lindeneau Elementary School

Nereo Rossi, 5th Grade teacher – Woodbrook Elementary School

Amy Marzano, 5th Grade teacher – Martin Luther King Elementary School

Nicole Petruzzi, 2nd Grade ICS teacher – James Madison Primary School
James Madison Intermediate

On March 2nd, the staff and students of JMI celebrated Read Across America Day with our annual community guest readers program. We invited numerous guest readers and dignitaries from our community to read to our students in their classrooms. Our “celebrity” guest readers included Superintendent Dr. O’Malley, Assistant Superintendents Ms. Ussak and Mr. Conklin, Board President Mr. Maeroff, Board Vice-President Ms. Iyer, Board Member Dr. Heelan, Mayor Ricigliano, former JMI principals, Mr. Weinfeld and Dr. Quinn, Deputy Chief Vaticano and Officer Ellmyer from the Edison Police Department, Rutgers student-athletes, and other community members. Our guest readers were treated to a PRIDE sponsored breakfast reception at our newly renovated library and media center.

Our celebration of reading continued with a Barnes and Noble Fundraiser Night. This special event featured our school chorus and our JMI teachers as guest readers to raise money for the PTO. Teachers and students bought books from Barnes and Noble, and a portion of the sales was returned to our school. The event was a huge success as we were able to raise $450.00 for the PTO.