

THE NJEA STANDS ALONE

*The New Jersey Education Association Stands Alone Compared to National and Other State Unions
When it Comes to Education Reform*

The NJEA Refuses to See What Other Education and Teachers Unions See - That Real Reform MUST Happen and IS Happening Across the Country

Randi Weingarten, President, National Federation of Teachers:

“... tenure should be earned, not given as a right. ... tenure needs to be reformed. ... Performance should be a driver.” ([“Teacher Tenure Necessary, Says Teachers' Unions,”](#) National Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten interview on NPR, 2/11/2011)

“We need to set high standards for students and teachers,” Ms. [Randi] Weingarten said. “This is the time to shed the old conflicts and come together.’ ‘Our system of evaluating teachers has never been adequate,’ she said, adding that for too long it “has failed to achieve what must be our goal: continuously improving’ ...She said student test scores should also be considered, not by comparing last year’s test scores with this year’s, but by assessing whether a teacher’s students had shown improvement in the classroom during the school year. Ms. Weingarten called for new “due process” procedures that might make it easier and faster to remove poorly performing teachers.” teaching. (Steven Greenhouse, “Union Chief Seeks to Overhaul Teacher Evaluation Process,” [NY Times](#), 1/12/2010)

Richard Iannuzzi, President, New York State United Teachers:

“Earlier this year at an education conference in California, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said, “The teacher evaluation system is basically broken. Ninety-nine percent of teachers in some states are rated above average... right now we don’t reward excellence. We don’t know who the superstars are.” In quoting the secretary, Iannuzzi, who oversees a 600,000 member-based union, admitted there is no effective system of evaluation in place. “We need to change the narrative from ‘how do we get rid of incompetent teachers’ to ‘what do we have to do to create excellent teachers and maintain them in the classroom,’” he said. In Japan, teachers are placed on a one-year probationary period, in Hong Kong a two-year period and Finland a three-year period; teachers in Sweden are granted tenure immediately. Yet the difference, as the NYSUT president sees it, is those countries have very competitive entrance processes. “That is not the case here,” he said. ...“We have a flawed system...and we wonder why it doesn’t work,” Iannuzzi added. ...The obligation should be continuous and if ever put into place, NYSUT’s Iannuzzi said there wouldn’t be an issue. “By demanding quality you won’t have to get rid of teachers the incompetent ones will just walk out,” he added. (Christian Falcone, “Tenure, performance evaluation play role in classroom quality,” [The New Rochelle Report](#), 12/3/2009)

Michael Mendel, Secretary, United Federation of Teachers:

“On Monday, a 63-member task force that includes teachers, administrators, union leaders and school board members released a comprehensive report that will move the state toward an objective evaluation method for its teachers and principals. The proposal calls for educators to be partially evaluated on the scores of their students on state standardized tests. ...Twenty percent of an educator’s evaluation will be based on student academic progress on state standardized assessments, 20 percent on locally selected measures of student achievement and 60 percent on other measures of teacher and principal effectiveness. ...The evaluations will be used in promotion, tenure and termination decisions. Tenured teachers with a pattern of ineffective results can be terminated through an expedited hearing process.“We hope this new system is not only an evaluation tool, but a teacher development tool,” Michael Mendel, secretary of the United Federation of Teachers.” (Scott Waldman, “This grade’s for the teacher,” [Albany Times Union](#), 4/5/2011)

Chicago Teachers Union, Illinois Federation of Teachers and Illinois Education Association:

"Given just about two weeks to draft an alternative proposal, lawyers for the Chicago Teachers Union, the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the Illinois Education Association worked through the holidays and came up with a plan they call "Accountability for All." Although they differ in the details, the proposals have similar elements. Both would link a teacher's classroom performance to the granting of tenure, recertification and decisions on dismissal for incompetence, filling job vacancies or reductions in force. Performance would be measured in part by student achievement. Both proposals would streamline dismissal, but the union version would require better support for teachers in such areas as professional development and remediation. The unions also want induction and mentoring programs to help new teachers succeed, and propose similar "accountability" processes for principals and district administrators, plus four hours of required training for school board members, among other things." (Jim Broadway, "Teachers unions unveil plan for tenure reform, but stand firm on strike rights," [Chicago Catalyst](#), 1/4/2011)

Doug Pratt, Director of Public Affairs, Michigan Education Association:

"Now state officials are talking about tenure reform – and teacher union leaders say they're "absolutely willing" to join that discussion. The state's largest school employee union has no interest in keeping bad teachers in the classroom, said Doug Pratt, public affairs director for the Michigan Education Association." (Julie Mack, "Tenure reform: Union says it's open to streamlining process for firing educators," [Kalamazoo Gazette](#), 11/21/2010)

It's No Wonder That When the NJEA Unveiled Their Teacher Tenure "Reform" Plan In December That Education Leaders Across The State Said it Failed to Address the Real Problems Facing Teacher Tenure

New Jersey School Boards Association spokesman Frank Belluscio:

"New Jersey School Boards Association spokesman Frank Belluscio said the union proposal did not address the fundamental need to tie job retention to good performance. The group has long pushed for renewable contracts of three-to-five years. "It's all well and good to try to expedite the hearing process but you're not getting to the root of the problem unless you eliminate lifetime tenure," he said. "If I don't perform well I'd be out of here. We need to bring the teaching profession into the real world." (Leslie Brody, "N.J. teachers union wants to move tenure cases out of courts," [The Record](#), 12/7/2010)

State Director for Democrats for Education Reform Kathleen Nugent:

"Kathleen Nugent, state director for Democrats for Education Reform, said it was promising that the NJEA was willing to talk about tenure reform, but disappointing it was only talking about the process. "If we really want to respect our teachers and support them and treat them as the super, most valuable assets they are, we need to evaluate them and reward them...based on their effectiveness," she said." (Leslie Brody, "N.J. teachers union wants to move tenure cases out of courts," [The Record](#), 12/7/2010)

Executive Director of E3 Derrell Bradford:

"To me, that misses the point," said Derrell Bradford, executive director of E3, a Newark-based group that advocates for publicly funded school choice. "The problem is that receiving tenure is like being on autopilot. It's granted way too easily and it's way too difficult to remove." (Lisa Fleisher, "N.J. Teachers Float Tenure Plan," [Wall Street Journal](#), 12/8/2010)

Charles Stile, The Record, NJEA's reforms are a "Declaration of Defense of the Status Quo":

"The New Jersey Education Association's list of reforms – unveiled Tuesday by its president, Barbara Keshishian, in a monotone, State of the State-length speech, sans applause lines – was at its heart a Declaration of Defense of the Status Quo...The NJEA is in the throes of the denial phase of the five stages of grief. Union leaders, for example, used Tuesday's news conference to vigorously defend its November teaching conference, the annual bane of New Jersey parents who scramble to find day care while the teachers mark time in a two-day confab by the casinos. A leave-the-reform-to-us mentality is at the root of their proposal...But all that talk was simply avoiding a discussion of the main reforms gaining traction across the country." (Charles Stile, "NJEA's reform ideas ignore new landscape," [The Record](#), 12/9/2010)

Daily Record, NJEA “should try harder” on reforms:

“...New Jersey Education Association on Tuesday came out with a proposal to change teacher tenure laws in the state. It should try harder. The NJEA's proposal fails to question whether teachers should get tenure after three years, as they do now, or even if tenure should exist...We need to debate all elements of tenure, including the current three-year standard and whether it should even exist. It's unclear if the NJEA is open to that debate...if the union wants input on so-called management issues, it must show a willingness to understand the impact its wages and benefits have on the community at large, namely property taxes. That should translate into a more reasonable stance in regard to wage concessions during bad economic times and teachers paying a share of their health benefits.” (“The NJEA and tenure,” [Daily Record](#), 12/9/2010)

Home News Tribune, “The union has to do better than this in developing compromise plans”:

“MISS: Little to see here. The New Jersey Education Association has taken a swing at tenure reform. It missed. The teachers union wants to put decisions on the dismissal of tenured teachers in the hands of an arbitrator rather than a judge. That's the extent of the plan. The union says the change would speed up the dismissal process while reducing costs. Of course that doesn't address what it would cost. If it's almost impossible to fire a bad teacher under the current system, what would this change mean? That it would only be really, really difficult? And still costly? The union has to do better than this in developing compromise plans. Otherwise it doesn't look like they're serious about it at all. And maybe it's not.” (“Police-merger plan gives towns something to consider,” [Home News Tribune](#), 12/11/2010)

Courier-Post, NJEA needs to look at “reality” and not use “crooked numbers”:

“However, in public education, there exists something known as tenure. Essentially, for teachers in New Jersey, it means this: Put in three years on the job and clear the tenure hurdle and that job is more or less yours for life unless you get caught doing something outrageously inappropriate...Crooked numbers. Out of those 129,000 people, only 29 who had tenure performed poorly enough to warrant their district moving to fire them? Teachers union officials will say with straight faces that's evidence of how good all teachers in this state are doing. Please. Are we all really so naive as to believe that only two hundredths of 1 percent of all teachers warrant firing for poor performance? Here's some reality: In any workplace, there are always going to be great workers, OK workers and a few bad workers. That's universal, it doesn't matter if it's a factory, a bank, a restaurant or a school. Eventually, the really bad ones should get axed if they don't quit first.” (“NJEA hasn't moved enough on tenure,” [Courier-Post](#), 12/13/2010)

Inquirer Editorial, “...the union must also be willing to work with Christie to make other needed reforms”:

“One way to improve public education is to speed up the process to remove bad teachers from the classroom. Unfortunately, getting rid of bad apples has become nearly impossible under union tenure rules that were crafted to protect teachers' rights but too often deny children a decent education. The antiquated system fails to hold teachers with a bad performance record accountable. They should not be allowed to wear tenure like a badge of honor that entitles them to a lifetime appointment in the classroom...the union must also be willing to work with Christie to make other needed reforms. They include changing how teachers are evaluated and rewarding the best teachers with merit pay. President Obama has called for similar reforms to raise the bar on teacher quality. His plan would give more training to those who need help. But those who still fail to improve after a reasonable period could be fired.” (“Firing bad teachers,” [Inquirer](#), 12/13/2010)

The Gloucester County Times, “We need a system that retains teachers because of good job performance...”:

“Gov. Chris Christie is philosophically opposed to tenure, arguing that it's an archaic custom which has outlived its usefulness. The New Jersey School Boards Association wants a system where job performance determines whether a teacher is retained. Others fault the NJEA proposal for not lengthening the probationary period before tenure, or for not linking eventual tenure to a series of renewable contracts...We need a system that retains teachers because of good job performance...” (“Find framework to reform tenure,” [The Gloucester County Times](#), 12/11/2010)

Herald News, “New Jersey Education Association’s tenure reform proposal is an uninspired tinker”:

“IT WAS billed as “significant reform.” But the New Jersey Education Association’s tenure reform proposal is an uninspired tinker...But the proposal introduced by NJEA President Barbara Keshishian Tuesday does nothing to answer the murky question of how to separate poorly performing teachers from the pack. And so it falls tragically

short of any real attempt to engage in the widening public debate about tenure and the lifetime job guarantee it has become.” (“Not enough reform,” [Herald News](#), 12/9/2010)

Bob Braun, NJEA's reform press conference “was a painful sight”:

“It was a painful sight. Leaders of the New Jersey Education Association, perhaps the state’s most powerful union — public or private — trying to convince the world it isn’t really a union...because Christie already has set the agenda, the NJEA had to talk about tenure reform and there, because a union is a union, it could not help but come down on the side of protecting its own. Its proposal to have arbitrators make tenure decisions might reduce the cost and time involved in firing a teacher but it would do nothing to change the standards by which teachers are judged. The idea got bad reviews. A spokesman for the governor said the proposal “wasn’t enough.” The New Jersey School Boards Association didn’t like it.” Joseph DePierro, dean of Seton Hall’s education school, said, “They don’t go far enough to cause real change.”...The NJEA leaders then proceeded to make matters worse by calling for expansion of the scope of collective bargaining to make issues like class size and textbook selection part of labor negotiations. That’s the union inexplicably doling out its own share of red meat to union haters because it leads to charges that unions are trying to take over the schools...DePierro has it right: “The NJEA is a union and its top priority is protecting membership. And that’s okay; that’s what they’re supposed to do. They do have a responsibility to the profession and they do care about children, but they will never be reform leaders or change agents.”” (Bob Braun, “Despite talk, NJEA takes care of its own,” [Star-Ledger Columnist](#), 12/9/2010)

Bob Ingle, “That’s reform?”:

“That’s reform? Missed it by a country mile. It leaves tenure at three years. If there has to be tenure tenure — and there is a good argument it should be eliminated — it shouldn’t kick in for 15 years or more. The union would be wise to replace Keshishian with someone with better communications skills. She opened a news conference with a statement that went on like “War And Peace” and then in answer to a question she arrogantly proclaimed “We’re the experts here.” No, you’re not experts. You’re an industrial style union that puts the interests of education and kids in the background while you take care of yourselves and threaten weak-kneed legislators and school board members.” (Bob Ingle, “Tenure reform? Oh, please,” [Politics Patrol](#), 12/8/2010)