

# etan

Georgiann O'Connor, Editor

Mary Lombardo, President

## ENFIELD TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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### Ravitch Blasts So-Called 'Reforms'



By Alain Jehlen

#### ETA ETA ETA ETA

#### Inside this issue:

CEA RA	2
NEA RA	3
Calendar of Events	3
2010-2012 ETA Officers	4

NEA Friend of Education award winner Diane Ravitch electrified the NEA Representative Assembly with an impassioned call for the defense of public education and the teaching profession.

"The current 'education reform' movement is pushing bad ideas," she said. "It wants to end tenure and seniority, to silence teachers' unions, to privatize large sectors of public education. Don't let it happen!"

Ravitch, an eminent historian of education who served as Assistant Secretary of Education under the President George H. W. Bush, supported some of those "bad ideas" for years but changed her mind when she saw the damage they caused put into practice in No Child Left Behind.

Ravitch blasted high-stakes testing, saying it might lead to higher test scores but not to real learning. She attacked merit pay because it undermines team work and has no support in education research. She warned that public school choice and more charter schools could split the public school system into one system for haves and one for have-nots, because many charter schools skim the best students. And she noted that national studies have repeatedly failed to find charter schools do a better job.

Introducing her to the RA, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel noted that her book, *The Death and Life Of the Great American School System*, has caused a sensation. He said the reason may be that it is so rare for someone to change their mind based on evidence.

Ravitch said NCLB set an impossible standard when it declared that 100 percent of children will be proficient. "Thousands of schools have been stigmatized as failing schools because they could not reach a goal that no state, no nation, and no district has ever reached," she said, so NCLB has "created a rhetoric of failure and paved the way for privatization."

"Public education," Ravitch declared, "is the backbone of this democracy, and we cannot turn it over to privateers."

Ravitch told the delegates that the nations whose students perform best in international comparisons "recognize that the best way to improve schools is to improve the education profession."

"We need expert teachers [and] experienced principals who are themselves master teachers, not a wave of newcomers who took a course called 'how to be a principal.'"

The NEA's Friend of Education award is given each year to someone who has significantly contributed to the improvement of public education.



ETA Office  
 546#A Enfield Street  
 Enfield, CT 06082  
 (860) 253-0500  
[enfieldt@snet.net](mailto:enfieldt@snet.net)

# CEA RA Election Results



## Jeff Leake Re-Elected Treasurer

Jeff Leake, a Cheshire middle school teacher, has been re-elected to a second three-year term as treasurer.

Leake, who begins his second term as treasurer August 1, will continue to chair the CEA Finance Committee and work with this committee of CEA members to formulate and monitor the Association's annual budget.

Prior to being elected to his first term as treasurer in 2007, Leake represented New Haven County teachers as a member of the CEA Board of Directors.



## Cheryl Prevost Re-Elected Secretary

Cheryl Prevost, a middle school teacher in East Hartford, was re-elected to a three-year term as secretary.

As CEA secretary, Prevost oversees the preparation and maintenance of all CEA governing records, policies, meeting minutes, and other pertinent documents.

An education technology teacher at the East Hartford Middle School, Prevost has served as CEA secretary for the past four years. She begins her new term August 1.



ETA delegates Tod Couture, Gray Wanzer, and Lisa Wanzer get their credential ready as they wait in line to vote for the CEA treasurer and secretary.

ETA President Mary Lombardo, Sarah Brown, and Tod Couture discuss issues and candidates at the CEA Representative Assembly.



CEA Treasurer Jeff Leake, ETA Executive Board Member Georgi O'Connor, NEA Director Tom Nicholas, ETA Executive Board Member Beth Radkovich, and CEA Vice President Shelia Cohen celebrate Jeff's election victory.



# Turning Hope into Action NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## 2010 National Education Association Representative Assembly held in New Orleans

By [Tim Walker](#)

An energized and angry NEA President Dennis Van Roekel issued a stirring call to action to the 8,200 delegates seated before him, criticizing the failed policies and competitive grant programs being pumped by so-called education reformers and the Obama administration's education officials.

"Let's create our moment! We've done it before and we can do it again" Van Roekel told the cheering crowd. While rallying the delegates with his call-to-action, Van Roekel laid out specific steps educators can take to create change.

Early in his speech, Van Roekel conceded that the road to change in 2009 year was strewn with potholes: an ongoing economic recession, budget cuts and layoffs, grandstanding politicians, and an extreme anti-educator, anti-union, anti-student environment.

"Plain and simple – this is not the change I hoped for. Our members feel betrayed and so do I! Our members are angry . So am I!"

With reauthorization of ESEA right around the corner, Van Roekel trained much of his rhetorical fire for the No Child Left Behind Act, mocking the law in stinging terms.



NEA President Van Roekel

"We must not allow another bad ESEA. Because if they take the old NCLB, fancy it up and call it the new ESEA, I think we ought to just call it TNT and blow the whole damn thing up!" Van Roekel said as the delegates roared their approval. To follow up, he asked delegates to send a clear and concise message by sending postcards to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan listing the three things they would like to see changed in ESEA. Nine thousand postcards, Van Roekel said, will send a loud and powerful message.

To build on that effort, Van Roekel is also calling on every state president to plan and implement a day of action between now and September to send a message to Congress.

Van Roekel also used his speech to announce the creation of the NEA Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching. The commission will offer recommendations on how teachers can exert greater authority over their profession and on the quality of public schools.

Van Roekel also invited the naysayers and critics to drop the scorns and threats and take a look at the great things NEA members are doing for the nations' schools.

Still, Van Roekel reassured the delegates that the NEA, despite recent setbacks, was strong and ready to to fight and "make it right." The challenges facing public education, he said, are too great to turn away from and activism must not begin and end in election years.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### August

8/2-4 Summer Leadership Conference

8/30 ETA Executive Board

### September

9/16 ETA Representative Assembly

### October

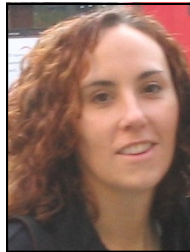
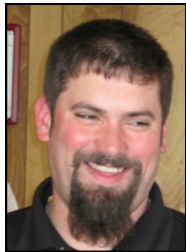
10/1 ETA Back to School Party

10/4 ETA Executive Board

10/6 CEA Retirement Workshop

10/21 ETA Representative Assembly

# ETA Officers 2010 - 2012



**Mary Lombardo**  
President  
Alcorn

**Gray Wanzer**  
Executive  
Vice President  
Enfield High

**Sue Marinaccio**  
Elementary  
Vice President  
Stowe

**Kelly Mazzone**  
Secondary  
Vice President  
Fermi

**Charlene Lauria**  
Middle School  
Vice President  
JF Kennedy

**Kathy Acker**  
Secretary  
Alcorn

**Mark Dennis**  
Treasurer  
Kennedy

[mary@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:mary@enfieldteachers.org)

[sue@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:sue@enfieldteachers.org)

[charlene@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:charlene@enfieldteachers.org)

[mark@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:mark@enfieldteachers.org)

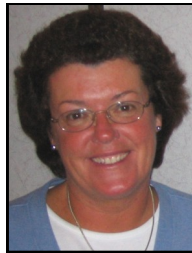
[gray@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:gray@enfieldteachers.org)

[kelly@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:kelly@enfieldteachers.org)

[kathy@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:kathy@enfieldteachers.org)

## ETA Committee Chairpersons

## CEA



**Tod Couture**  
Negotiations  
Fermi

**Beth Radkovich**  
Membership  
Hale

**Jason Bouchard**  
Political Action  
Enfield High

**Tod Couture**  
Professional  
Rights &  
Responsibilities  
Fermi

**Georgi O'Connor**  
Professional  
Growth  
"etan"  
Barnard

**Joe Czerbinski**  
UniServ Rep  
CEA

[tod@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:tod@enfieldteachers.org)

[georgi@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:georgi@enfieldteachers.org)

[beth@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:beth@enfieldteachers.org)

[tod@enfieldteachers.org](mailto:tod@enfieldteachers.org)

\*Elementary, Secondary and New Teacher Representatives from the Floor of the RA will be elected in September for a one-year term. Current Reps, Nancy Murphy, Mark Dennis and Gray Wanzer will continue to serve until the election.

