



# LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum

Pilot Program by Garden State Equality  
and Make it Better for Youth





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## About Garden State Equality

Founded in 2004, Garden State Equality is New Jersey's largest LGBTQ advocacy and education organization with over 150,000 members. Its mission is to provide quality, innovative community programs, educate and train service providers, and pass pro-equality policies to protect and meet the needs of LGBTQ New Jerseyans.

In collaboration with community partners, Garden State Equality led efforts to ensure nondiscrimination protections for transgender people and gender nonconforming people in New Jersey. They passed the most comprehensive anti-bullying law in the country, ended sexual orientation and gender identity/expression change efforts in New Jersey (sometimes called conversion therapy), and brought marriage equality to New Jersey. Garden State Equality works to address safe environments for LGBTQ youth, improve health services for the LGBTQ community, and ensure respectful treatment of LGBTQ seniors.

## About Make It Better For Youth

Established 2010, Make it Better for Youth, the Monmouth County Consortium for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Youth is an umbrella organization of concerned and determined educators, community leaders, arts and cultural organizations, businesses and individuals who pooling resources and ideas to make it better with education, outreach, and social opportunities for our LGBTQ youth.

## Pilot Program Vision Statement

The LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program is committed to supporting public schools in the State of New Jersey in providing a learning environment that recognizes the significant historic, economic, and social contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals in the United States of America. It is our belief that all children will benefit from instruction that is inclusive of the contributions of LGBTQ individuals across all content areas.

We believe that when classroom materials are both aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards and reflect diverse instruction, students will be able to appreciate differences and acquire skills and knowledge that are essential to function effectively with LGBTQ individuals, LGBTQ allies, and people of various backgrounds. Further, we hold it to be true that when LGBTQ individuals see themselves reflected positively in instruction and various aspects of their school, the educational climate and well-being of LGBTQ individuals will be positively impacted.

We believe through positive partnerships with staff members, students, families, and community members we can successfully support school districts in developing LGBTQ-Inclusive cultures. A culture that fosters LGBTQ-inclusion, respect for people of various backgrounds, and promotes affirmation and acceptance will enable our students to function successfully as productive and contributing citizens in a pluralistic society.

## Pilot Program Mission Statement

The primary mission of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program is to prepare school districts to properly implement the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum. It is with high expectations that our pilot program foster:

1. A strong foundation regarding the proper application of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum, including a positive and varied approach to teaching and learning that is consistently inclusive of LGBTQ individuals.
2. An emphasis on the adoption of instructional materials that accurately portray the LGBTQ community.
3. A respect for and an appreciation of the significant historic contributions of LGBTQ individuals on the economic, political, and social development of the State of New Jersey and the United States of America.
4. A sense of responsibility, good citizenship, and accountability for all staff members in public schools in creating positive learning environments for LGBTQ individuals.
5. An involvement by the parents and community members in ensuring a climate of inclusivity and respect for LGBTQ individuals in public schools in the State of New Jersey.

## New Jersey's LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Law

On January 31, 2019, Governor Phil Murphy signed Assembly Bill 1335, the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Bill, into law. This made New Jersey the second state in the nation to require schools to teach about the struggles and triumphs of the LGBTQ community. New Jersey is the first state to have an interdisciplinary approach.

The LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Bill requires boards of education to include instruction and adopt instructional materials that accurately portray the political, economic, and social contributions of LGBTQ individuals. Public Schools in New Jersey must align their materials and instruction to Assembly Bill 1335 across all content areas for middle school and high school-age students by the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Garden State Equality and Make It Better for Youth worked with the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Shore Area NOW, and the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice worked in collaboration to make Assembly Bill 1335 a reality.

## Structure of the Pilot Program

The LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program will include data collection and analysis, development of engaging lessons across all subject areas, a statewide educators conference, ongoing professional development training, and a pilot group of 12 select schools to roll out LGBTQ inclusive curriculum.

The pilot program will run from January 2020 - June 2020. The grade levels involved with the pilot program will be grades 5/6, 8, 10, and 12. Pilot schools will also have exclusive access to additional lessons posted pilot for grades 6, 7, 9 and 11 in the 2020-2021 school year. The curriculum will be available through an online resource and will address all content areas. The LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum documents will be available in a digital format in which all participating administrators and teachers can access. Each school will be provided to a login and pass code to access lessons. Schools that are selected to be in the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program must offer a minimum of 2 classes in each content area that will offer the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum.

## Elementary Schools

If an elementary school houses 5th grade students, Garden State Equality will provide LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum to a minimum of:

- 2 math classes (adaptation)
- 2 ELA classes
- 2 social studies classes
- 2 science classes
- 2 visual & performing arts classes
- 2 World Language classes

This will result in a minimum of 12 classes being exposed to the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum.

## Middle Schools

If a middle school houses 5th/6th and 8th grade students, Garden State Equality will provide LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum to a minimum of:

- 2 math classes (adaptation)
- 2 ELA classes
- 2 social studies classes
- 2 science classes
- 2 visual & performing arts classes
- 2 World Language classes

This will result in a minimum of 24 5th/6th grade and 8th grade classes being exposed to the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum.

## High Schools

If a high school houses 10th & 12th grade students, Garden State Equality will provide LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum to a minimum of:

- 2 math classes (adaptation)
- 2 ELA classes
- 2 social studies classes
- 2 science classes
- 2 visual & performing arts classes
- 2 World Language classes

This will result in a minimum of 24 10th and 12th grade classes being exposed to the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum.

## Charter Schools

Charter schools will be required to provide all content area lessons in 2 classes spanning 5th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades totaling 60 classes being exposed to LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum.

## How Were Schools Chosen?

Garden State Equality had conversations with over 200 schools surrounding the pilot program over the last year. After applications closed on October 1, 2019, over 50 schools had applied. Those applicants represented 19 of New Jersey's 21 counties.

When considering applicants, there were two main criteria: schools that had the greatest need for inclusive curriculum and schools that demonstrated the most motivation to improve on building an affirming LGBTQ-inclusive environment. Those determinations were balanced with a desire to create a diverse study set representing the geographic, racial, and economic diversity of New Jersey.

## Selected Schools

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Asbury Park
- Forrestdale School in Rumson
- Haddon Heights Junior-Senior High School (middle and high school)
- Highland Park Middle School
- Highland Park High School
- Millburn Middle School
- Newark Arts High School
- Pinelands Regional Junior High School in Tuckerton
- Bergen Arts and Science Charter High School in Hackensack
- Chartertech High School for the Performing Arts in Somers Point
- Unity Charter School in Morristown

## Cohort B

Schools that were not selected to be part of the pilot have been invited to be a part of Cohort B with access to lesson plans. They will not receive a curriculum coach or professional development training. They will be included in the data collection with Stockton University by completing surveys and participating in interviews about efficacy of lessons. Participating schools will be announced at a later date.

## How Were Teachers Chosen?

The selection of the teachers who will infuse the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum into lessons is at the discretion of the building administrator and/or Superintendent of Schools. The selected teachers were shared with the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program Coach prior to January 2020. Selected teachers must remain with the pilot program through June 2020. Communication will be via email, by phone and in person via coaching agreement as needed.

Garden State Equality strongly recommended that school district administrators select teachers who are in excellent standing regarding previous evaluations, who maintain consistent attendance, and who have expressed interest in learning more about the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum and applying this knowledge to instruction. It was strongly recommended that administrators offer the opportunity for teachers to be a part of the pilot program and select teachers who have displayed a strong interest and passion for the LGBTQ inclusion in schools.

## Ongoing Curriculum Development

The current pilot includes roughly 45 lesson plans across subject areas. Existing lesson plans will be revised throughout the pilot program based on feedback from educators. An additional 60 lesson plans will be released this year, including a special series of lessons focused on New Jersey-specific LGBTQ figures and historical moments, such as Babs Siperstein, Marsha P. Johnson, and movements to secure pro-LGBTQ protections in New Jersey.

## Funding for Curriculum Development

Garden State Equality secured \$185,000 in grant funding from the Braitmayer Foundation and PSEG Foundation (disbursed over two years beginning in 2019) to support its curriculum development. This was the first time the Braitmayer Foundation awarded a grant to an LGBTQ organization.

## Benefits of Being a Pilot School

- Exclusive access to the LGBTQ-Inclusive curriculum.
- The opportunity to infuse LGBTQ topics in lessons in an appropriate manner with the support of trained professionals.
- Consistent support regarding best practices on infusing the LGBTQ- Inclusive Curriculum in existing lessons and suggestions on lesson plan modifications and instruction.
- Ongoing professional development training for staff members facilitated by Garden State Equality and Make It Better for Youth. Training sessions will be offered in the manner which the administration and curriculum coaches see fit. A collaborative approach as well as a coaching model will be utilized.
- Data collection and analysis that will be completed for each pilot school by an accredited university.
- Garden State Equality, Make It Better 4 Youth and our community sponsors will host an LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum Conference in Spring 2020. All participating schools will be provided with free access to the conference to continue to provide robust LGBTQ inclusive content through your district.
- Opportunity to facilitate a workshop at the New Jersey LGBTQ Conference in March 2020.
- The opportunity to be a part of educational history.
- The opportunity to earn certification as a SAFE (Safe, Affirming, Fair, & Equitable) school.
- Ongoing support for Board of Education members and central administration in the development of a Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Committee regarding LGBTQ-specific policies and procedures.
- Information sessions for parents/guardians and community members regarding the LGBTQ-Inclusive curriculum and pilot program.

## Support for Staff Members

### Professional Development

Garden State Equality and Make It Better for Youth will provide 3 formal professional development training sessions for staff members facilitated by trained professionals. Training sessions will be offered in the manner which the administration and curriculum coaches see fit. A collaborative approach as well as a coaching model will be utilized.

### Curriculum Coaches

Each school will be assigned a Curriculum Coach. The Curriculum Coach will serve as the point person for teachers and administration regarding questions and concerns. In addition, the Curriculum Coach will sit in on lessons in order to provide valuable feedback to the teacher. The information shared regarding the visit will be solely between the Curriculum Coach and teacher, this is not an evaluative visit. The purpose of the classroom visits are to support the teacher and improve LGBTQ-specific lesson development and instruction.

### Online Support

Participants in the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program will have exclusive access to an online platform which will enable participants to share lessons as well as share ideas, questions, and experiences with other pilot schools.

## Parent & Community Meetings

Each school will be provided with two Information Sessions for parents/guardians and community members regarding the LGBTQ-Inclusive curriculum and pilot program will be offered between January 2020 and June 2020. The information sessions will be facilitated by a trained professional from Garden State Equality and/or Make It Better for Youth. The Superintendent of Schools and building principal must be present during the community meetings. Staff members are welcome to attend the community meetings as well. Parents/guardians and community members will be able to ask questions regarding the LGBTQ-Inclusive curriculum and pilot program.

## Data Collection Study with Stockton University

The purpose of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program is to examine the application, experiences, and outcomes of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum. The perceptions and experiences of educators, students, and community members will be explored. Socioeconomic status, geographical location, and level of instruction will be examined to determine best practices in the application of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum in the future.

The development of instruments, data collection, data maintenance, and evaluation of data will be performed by a Data Team which will consist of professionals from a selected state university, Garden State Equality, and Make It Better for Youth. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be utilized to ensure the protection of the welfare, rights, and privacy of all participants. All participants will remain anonymous during and after the pilot program.

The Data Team will handle all aspects of the data collection, evaluation of data, and publication of data. All participating school districts will receive data that is specific to their school after the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program is complete.

## LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Conference: May 2, 2020 at Monmouth University

Garden State Equality in partnership with Make It Better for Youth will present the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Conference to promote safety, inclusion, and best practices regarding LGBTQ-specific topics in education. The conference will provide a comprehensive opportunity for educators, administrators, and community members to build awareness and cultural competency in schools, as well as learn of emerging practices and gather resources from leading experts in the field.

An important part of the LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program is data collection, therefore, pilot classroom educators and administrators must attend the conference. A small portion of the day will be spent in research-based interviews. A larger portion of the day will be spent with the assigned Curriculum Coach and in professional development workshops.

Pilot schools will be offered a select number of representatives to attend the conference at no cost.

## Curriculum Pilot Program Leaders

**Ashley Chiappano** is the Safe Schools & Community Education Manager for Garden State Equality and a parent, advocate, facilitator, and trainer. She has worked in the non-profit and public service fields for over 10 years. During her time as a public servant and child welfare professional, she trained and licensed many LGBTQ foster/adoptive parents for the Department of Child Protection and Permanency while also participated in their Safe Space Program. Over the past two years at Garden State Equality, Ashley has expanded existing programming and developed new initiatives that serve LGBTQ+ youth and the greater community.

As the Safe Schools & Community Education Manager, she oversees 6 initiatives: LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Development, Teach & Affirm, Library & Community Education Series, LGBTQ+ Youth Advocacy, Youth Caucus Leadership Program, and Educators for Equality. As part of Ashley's role as Safe Schools and Community Education Manager, she oversees, the first of its kind in the nation, data driven LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program for New Jersey's Public Schools. Ashley received her B.A. in Communication-Public Relations and Journalism from Monmouth University in 2005 and her M.A. in Human Service from Capella University in 2010. She loves educating others on how to make schools safer for LGBTQ+ youth and is committed to creating safe and affirming school environments. Ashley enjoys spending her free time going on adventures with her four amazing kids.

**Dr. Lori Burns** is an educator and public school principal in New Jersey. She completed extensive research on the impact of school climate on lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGT) public school teachers in the State of New Jersey. In response to the dangerous conditions for LGBTQ educators, Dr. Burns partnered with Garden State Equality in creating the Educators for Equality program. Educators for Equality is comprised of LGBTQ+ educators and allies who advocate for inclusive schools through LGBTQ+ specific policies, programs, best practices, professional development, and inclusive curriculum. Dr. Burns' academic work in the area of LGBTQ+ topics in schools include scholarly articles and presentations regarding LGBTQ+ competency and best practices.

Dr. Burns has partnered with Garden State Equality and Make It Better for Youth in developing and implementing the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum for the State of New Jersey. As the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program Manager, Dr. Burns has developed the structure of the pilot program, provides support for the pilot schools, and will conduct research regarding the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum.

Dr. Burns received her Bachelor of Science and teaching certification from Montclair State University, Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Georgian Court University, and Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Saint Peter's University. Dr. Burns identifies as a lesbian and is passionate about the importance of LGBTQ+ visibility in schools.

**Kate Okeson** is an art educator and artist who has been teaching in NJ for more than 20 years. A graduate of Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, Kate is informed by intensive studio practice; bringing inquiry driven processes and exploration to the classroom. In her work as an educator, she attends to the discipline of creative and critical thought as a means to ask beautiful questions which lead to growth and action. Her focus has been on creating open, accepting, and creative spaces in which students develop conceptual skills in pursuit of potential answers; the art projects and interdisciplinary seminars are the method by which students learn to develop ownership of their education, and approach the classroom as a locus of collaboration.

In addition to teaching she is co-founder of Make It Better for Youth, the Monmouth County Consortium for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Questioning Youth, where she has organized concerned and determined educators, community leaders, arts and cultural organizations, businesses and individuals to pool resources and ideas to affirm and accept our young LGBTQ+ community through education, outreach, and social opportunities. Over the last 2+ years, MIB4Y has focused intently on educator-to-educator initiatives, including the development of a pilot curriculum for NJ's LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum.

## Curriculum Lesson Plan Writers

**Danielle Kay, BA, MS** has been teaching English for 20 years. She currently teaches at Mt. Olive High School where she is also the advisor of the MOHS Gender & Sexuality Alliance. She has a bachelor's degree in English and History, as well as a Masters in Reading. Danielle is passionate about helping students discover their own voices through writing. She also enjoys helping her students rediscover a love of reading by providing them access to a diverse classroom library where they can see themselves in the pages of a book. Understanding the importance of representation, Danielle was eager to be part of a team creating inclusive lessons for New Jersey students and is excited to see the positive outcomes that will result from a more diverse curriculum. When she's not at school, Danielle spends her time with her wife, Jen, and their growing family.

**Dr. Kenneth Kunz** is an Assistant Professor of Literacy/Language Arts at Monmouth University. He received his B.A. in Elementary Education/English from Kean University. Passionate about literacy instruction, Dr. Kunz holds a master's degree in Reading Specialization and a doctorate in Teacher Leadership from Rutgers University. He has presented professional development centered on literacy instruction in classrooms across New Jersey and at state and national conferences. He is co-author of *Breaking through the Language Arts Block: Organizing and Managing an Exemplary Literacy Day*. Dr. Kunz has served in the roles of teacher, administrator, literacy coach/consultant, and teacher-educator.

In New Jersey, Dr. Kunz serves as President of the NJ Literacy Association. Beyond the state, he serves on the Board of the International Literacy Association. In 2007, Dr. Kunz received recognition through the New Jersey Governor's Teacher Recognition Program. In 2014, Dr. Kunz received the Edward Fry Endowed Fellowship in Literacy at Rutgers University.

**Rose Flahive, Ed.M.** is a sixth grade language arts teacher in Central New Jersey. She attended Rutgers University School of Arts and Sciences and Douglass Residential College for her undergraduate degree in English with a minor in Cultural

Anthropology. In addition, she attended the Rutgers Graduate School of Education and earned an Ed. M. in English Language Arts. Outside of school, she volunteers for Girl Scouts, performs in the New Jersey Renaissance Faire as a member of the supporting cast, sings in a choir, and runs very long distances. A major goal in her life has been to be the kind of teacher she didn't know she needed as a bisexual teenager growing up.

**Beatriz Pelaez-Martinez, MAT** is a world language teacher currently completing her 18th year as a high school teacher. She has taught Spanish and Italian at multiple levels of proficiency including AP levels. An alternate route teacher, she holds an MAT from Rutgers University and started her career at Middletown High School North. She has presented at NECTFL before and she hopes to continue to contribute to her profession through this initiative. She feels very passionately about inclusion in our curriculum and is very excited to be part of this project. She currently works in Tenafly High School.

**Dennis Hill** teaches United States History I & II, Economics, and World History for Union County Educational Services Commission. He has worked in public education for over 10 years following a career in international health policy. He completed his Bachelor of Arts in History at the University of Chicago and received his New Jersey Teaching Certification from Bloomfield College. He also works as a private ACT/SAT tutor and college advisor. Starting in Fall 2019 he will begin working as Lead Teacher for the WIOC youth education program at Passaic County Community College. When he isn't reading academic texts for research, he enjoys gardening, hiking, music, and occasionally reading academic texts for pleasure. He lives in Montclair, NJ with his partner and her son.

**Noël Desiree Lefebvre, MA, BFA** is an artist educator from Manasquan, New Jersey. She developed a passion for education after supporting young artists develop their portfolio for college at New York University's summer programs. After receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University, Noël pursued her interest in museum education at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) where she received a Master of Arts. As a graduate fellow at RISD, Noël held positions in the

Departments of History of Art and Visual Culture and Graduate Studies, in addition to the RISD Museum where she continued to work after graduation. Currently, Noël is a Museum Educator at the Monmouth Museum. Inspired by the intersections of art, design, and public health, Noël seeks to make her world a more equitable place.

**Lesley Ann Thomson, M.A.** is a 15-year social studies educator in Ocean County NJ where she teaches courses on African American History, United States History, and New Jersey History. She is currently a doctoral student of historical studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where her focus specializes on African American history during Reconstruction. In addition to her career at Barnegat, Ms. Thomson frequently adjuncts for local community colleges, and is a member of the New Jersey Council for Social Studies, & Asbury Park African American Music Project. Due to her successful integration of pedagogical strategies of engagement in the classroom, Ms. Thomson was awarded the Patriot's Podium from the State of New Jersey in 2008, Teacher of the Year for Barnegat Schools in 2010, and National VFW Teacher of the Year Award in 2011.

**Allison D. Connolly** has been a history and social studies teacher for the last twenty years. She began her career at Red Bank Catholic High School, then joined the staff of Ocean Township High School. Ms. Connolly earned her M.A. in Administration, Supervision and Curriculum Planning from Georgian Court College and is currently completing a second M.A. in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Kean University. She is a member of the Educators for Equality executive committee and a volunteer for the Center for Holocaust, Human Rights and Genocide Education (CHHANGE) at Brookdale Community College. Allison also was elected to two terms on the Wall Township Board of Education, serving as President in 2017 and 2019. As an ally of the LGBTQ+ community, Ms. Connolly feels participating in this endeavor is one of the most meaningful initiatives of her professional career. She grew up and resides in Wall Township with her husband, Bill, and two sons.

**Joy Barnes-Johnson** has worked in large-scale assessment, curriculum design, professional development/teacher education, adult basic, and secondary science education over the span of her 25+ year career. Having earned degrees in Urban

Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Chemistry, she enjoys the challenge of interdisciplinary STEM literacy. She currently works in secondary education and consults for several racial literacy, STEM Education and training projects. Her research agenda is based on an equity framework that she calls EqSTrEAM educational responses exploring disparate constructs around race, gender, class, ability and agency (equity) in academic areas that engage learning stakeholders in creative, innovative and/or development outcomes. She has published several articles that address teacher preparation, policy and curriculum design. In 2018, she co-edited a research volume entitled STEM-21: Equity in Teaching and Learning to Meet Global Challenges of Standards, Engagement and Transformation. She was recently honored by the NJ Education Association with the 2019 MLK Jr. Human & Civil Rights Award.

**Stefanie Shoop M.A.** graduated from Providence College with a B.A. in Biology. She began her teaching career at South River High School as an alternate-route candidate. From there she moved to Princeton High School where she has taught various courses like Ecology, Biology I, Biology II. She has now been at Princeton HS for 11 years, and is currently teaching Accelerated and AP Biology. During that time, she also earned an MA in Teacher Leadership from Rowan University, and is working on a second masters at the American College of Education.

**Christine Berg** is a World Language Teacher with 20 years of experience in education. She holds a B.S. in Biology and French from St. Lawrence University, and an M.A. in French studies from the University at Albany. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in World Language. She has been published in the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers Journal and the French Review, and has presented at the Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey annual conference. She was the recipient of two Best Buy Teach awards for using technology to enhance her classroom curriculum with a focus on students with disabilities. In addition, she worked with IBM to bring translation software to her previous district in order to translate district office communications for Spanish-speaking parents. Christine is committed to ensuring equity in education for all students. She is currently teaching at Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School.

**Stacie Ferrara, Ed.D** is the interim Supervisor for STEM and Physical Education at Neptune Township School District. She is returning to the district after serving in roles of principal, vice principal and academic supervisor. Dr. Ferrara started her career in education as a chemistry teacher at Neptune High School. She served as the Science Department Chairperson and was involved in the development of the district green curriculum and 2009 science curriculum adoptions. Dr. Ferrara was also a science teacher and academic supervisor with the Freehold Regional High School District. She has presented at the New Jersey Science Teacher Convention, NJPSA and Techspo on science literacy, inquiry-based lab investigations and technology topics. In her leadership roles as an assistant principal and principal, she has worked on Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment programs, chronic absenteeism, STEM curriculum, and authentic research projects with community partnerships. Dr. Ferrara holds a master's degree in Administration from Georgian Court University and a doctorate from Saint Peter's University in Educational Leadership. She is active in the NJ ASCD Central affiliate as the Assistant Director.

**Amy Lepping, BFA, EdM** is a studio art educator in NJ. She holds National Board Certification in Adolescent -Young Adult Art, National Art Education Certification K-12, and has been the recipient of the Governor's Teacher Recognition Award. In the classroom, Amy's focus has been on critical thinking for the arts connected to intensive studio practice, imparting rigor in skilled approach from her students. An exhibiting artist, Amy's paintings are visual meditations that explore the feelings of being in the ocean - visually addressing a tension between the stillness underneath and the currents above.

**Randy Narvaez, M.A.** joined Edison Township Public Schools in 2018, following seven years of service as a teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal. His career began at Camden's Promise Charter School, where he taught 5th-8thgrade Spanish and ESL. Before joining Edison Township Public Schools, Mr. Narvaez also taught 3rdgrade at North Star Academy in Newark, NJ and served as an assistant principal of instruction at Mastery Molina Elementary in Camden, NJ. A New Jersey native,

Randy was born in Atlantic City, and graduated from Absegami High School in Galloway Township. He received his undergraduate degree in education from Temple University and earned his Master's Degree in Urban Education from the University of Pennsylvania University. In 2016, Mr. Narvaez was selected as to join TNTP's highly selective PLUS Residency, a two-year, practice-based principal certification program that prepares school leaders to transform teaching in schools.

**Mike Emmich** is a social studies teacher who has worked at Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School for the last 13 years. He was recognized as the 2019 Educator of the Year and was nominated for the Princeton Prize for Distinguished Secondary School Teaching. Through his teaching of courses in American history, human geography, and the American legal system, Mike has endeavored to make issues related to citizenship, identity, hidden histories, and the pursuit of equity the foundation of his pedagogy. In addition, he was the co-founder of Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School's Gay-Straight Alliance, and has worked both formally and informally to further the pursuit of just treatment for all students in New Jersey's public schools. Mike received his Bachelor of Arts in history from Rutgers University, completed a teaching certification program through Georgian Court University, and is currently completing a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Montclair State University.