

NJAEOP HORIZONS

Newsletter

Summer 2025 Edition



The New Jersey Association of
Educational Office Professionals

EXECUTIVE BOARD

2025-2026

Melissa Cruz
President

TBD
Vice President

TBD
Treasurer

Joanne Duncan
PDP Registrar

Helaine Spitzer
Secretary and
Horizons Newsletter

Denise Lambert
Membership
Chairperson

“Our greatest
weakness lies
in giving up.
The most certain
way to succeed
is always to
try just one
more time.”

Thomas A. Edison

A Message from the NJAEOP President

Dear Members,

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself as the President of NJAEOP. My name is Melissa Cruz, and I joined this wonderful organization in 2018. That same year, I became a member of the Executive Committee, first serving as Recording Secretary and then as Webmaster after attending my very first annual convention.

When I joined the executive board, I had little to no experience and, quite honestly, I was nervous. Thankfully, NJAEOP is made up of incredibly knowledgeable and generous members who were willing to share their time, expertise, and encouragement. I learned so much and felt truly fortunate to have joined this great association when I did.

As we move forward, the executive team and I are committed to continuing to provide valuable services such as professional development. We are also exploring new opportunities to expand these offerings—including workshops and additional training sessions—to better serve our members. We are here for you and encourage you to get involved by joining our team.

It is truly an honor to serve as the NJAEOP President for the 2024-2026 term. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any board member with your questions, ideas, or concerns. We look forward to connecting with you and hearing your thoughts.

Warm regards,
Melissa Cruz
President, NJAEOP

MEET THE BOARD

Joanne Duncan, PDP Registrar

Joanne serves as the Registrar for the New Jersey Association of Educational Office Professionals (NJAEOP), where she oversees the Professional Development Program. A dedicated member of NJAEOP for over five years and Registrar for the past three, Joanne is passionate about empowering office professionals across the state through education, growth, and connection.

Joanne brings more than seven years of experience in education and currently works as an Administrative Assistant at West Orange High School in West Orange, NJ. Prior to her career in education, she spent over two decades in Human Resources Management within the corporate legal and sports entertainment industries.

Committed to rebuilding and rebranding NJAEOP while honoring its legacy, Joanne is driven by a mission to provide valuable resources and opportunities that help New Jersey office professionals thrive—enhancing their skills, adding value to their roles, and supporting their personal and professional development.

Denise Lambert, Membership Chairperson

Denise serves as the Membership Chairperson for the New Jersey Association of Educational Office Professionals (NJAEOP), where she oversees the membership of all persons engaged in clerical, business office, and/or secretarial office work in any educational system in the State of New Jersey or in organizations concerned with public education in the State, shall be eligible for active membership.

Denise is a dedicated member of NJAEOP for over five years and Membership Chair for the past two and a half years. Denise is the kind of individual who consistently demonstrates reliability, adaptability, and is passionate about encouraging old and new members to grow and stay connected with the (NJAEOP) through education.

Denise brings more than seven years of experience in education and currently works as an Administrative Assistant at the Early Childhood Learning Center in West Orange, NJ.

Denise is committed to maintaining membership of active and new members and to afford the opportunity of achieving professional growth through the Professional Development Program (PDP).

Helaine Spitzer - Recording Secretary & Horizons Newsletter Contributor

Helaine began her career in education with the West Orange Board of Education in 2002, starting as a lunch aide at one of the district's elementary schools. Her dedication and commitment to supporting students and staff led her to a clerical aide position in 2011. By 2013, she advanced to the role of administrative assistant at West Orange High School, where she continues to serve with professionalism and care.

In 2019, Helaine became a proud member of the New Jersey Association of Educational Office Professionals (NJAEOP). Her leadership and organizational skills earned her a position on the NJAEOP Executive Team as Recording Secretary in 2021. A year later, she further expanded her involvement by joining the *Horizons* Newsletter team, where she found a creative outlet for her passion for communication and storytelling.

Known for her collaborative spirit and innovative ideas, Helaine values the meaningful connections she builds through her work. Her creativity, dedication, and years of experience make her a highly respected and valued member of both the West Orange school community and NJAEOP.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PDP)

The Value of Professional Development

Participants in the **NJAEOP Professional Development Program (PDP)** dedicate many hours in the classroom to earn their certificates. The PDP is a **voluntary program** designed to encourage office professionals to pursue **college-level courses** in areas relevant to their work and is driven by two primary goals: **personal satisfaction** and a **strong commitment to ongoing professional improvement**.

Several New Jersey school districts have recognized this commitment by offering **tuition reimbursement** and/or **stipends** for employees who complete PDP certificates. **NJAEOP greatly appreciates their support and encouragement.**

Since its founding, **NJAEOP** has promoted professional growth and development across the state. The organization's educational journey began in **1965**, when adult education courses were launched in public schools statewide. In **November 1976**, NJAEOP awarded the first PDP certificates, marking a significant milestone in professional education for office personnel.

Employers value professionals who take initiative to learn independently and embrace new challenges. Earning PDP certificates or other development credentials demonstrates **dedication**, **expertise**, and a **proactive mindset**—qualities that can make a difference when pursuing promotions or new career opportunities.

For more information about the NJAEOP Professional Development Program and how it can benefit your career, please contact:

Joanne Duncan | PDP Registrar | jodeeduncan3@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW?

NEA Travel Program – \$500 Travel Dollars for NJEA Members!

As an NJEA member, you have access to the **NEA Travel Program**, a **complimentary member benefit** that includes **\$500 in travel dollars** automatically credited to your account.

This exclusive benefit provides access to **special member-only rates** — up to **60% off** the best available prices — on: Hotels & Resorts, Car Rentals, Cruises, Guided Tours, etc.

Your **\$500 in travel dollars** can be applied directly to your bookings, helping you save even more on your next getaway!

Start planning your trip today and take advantage of this incredible NJEA Member Benefit through the NEA Travel Program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PDP)

PDP Awards

Each year, NJAEOP hosts our Annual Business Meeting/Convention/Luncheon on the first Thursday in November.

We apologize to our members as we were not able to have our event in 2024 and would like to recognize individuals who participated in the Professional Development Program and completed one or more of the three options since our last annual meeting on Thursday, November 9, 2023.

- ***Alison Briant-Burley | Title I Curriculum Secretary | Galloway Township School District***
Option I - January 2025
- ***Darlene Derry | Administrative Assistant - Office of the Principal | Galloway Township Middle School***
Option 1 - February 2024 | Options II and III - May 2024
- ***Noura Estrada | Administrative Assistant | Liberty Middle School | West Orange School District***
Options I, II, and III - October 2024
- ***Sinetra Gandy | Secretary | Roland Rogers Elementary School | Galloway Township School District***
Options I, II, and III - August 2024
- ***Audrey Irby | Administrative Assistant | Hackensack High School | Hackensack School District***
Options I, II, and III - March 2025

Congratulations on a job well done!

We are discussing and planning for our November 2025 Annual Meeting/Convention/Luncheon. Stay tuned for more information.

If you have any questions or if your name was not mentioned above, please contact Joanne Duncan, PDP Registrar at jodeeduncan3@gmail.com.

DID YOU KNOW?

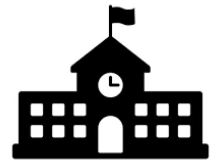
We want to ensure that everyone is aware of any available **professional development opportunities** outlined in your employment contract or bargaining agreement.

If you haven't already, please take a moment to **review your contract** to see if there are any **benefits related to professional development** — such as reimbursements, paid workshop days, credits for continuing education, or stipends offered for completing classes/NJAEOP's Professional Development Program. **DON'T MISS OUT!!**

Free Online Training Courses & Skill Building For Administrative Assistants

“In a fast-paced working environment, staying up to date with skills and knowledge is crucial. However, many Administrative Assistants neglect their professional development and miss opportunities for growth and advancement”

Free Professional Development Learning



- Linked In Learning
https://www.linkedin.com/learning/?trk=lynda_redirect_learning
- Office Dynamics Online
<https://officedynamics.com/online-training-for-administrative-assistants/>
- Alison
<https://alison.com/course/administrative-support>

Free Webinars



- ASAP.org
<https://www.asaporg.com/webinars/free>
- ExecutiveAssistants.com
<https://www.executiveassistant.com/webinarseries>
- Ed2Go
<https://www.ed2go.com/>

HELPFUL KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

- **Ctrl + A: Select all text.**
- **Ctrl + C: Copy selected text.**
- **Ctrl + X: Cut selected text.**
- **Ctrl + V: Paste copied or cut text.**
- **Ctrl + Z: Undo an action.**
- **Ctrl + Y: Redo an action.**
- **Ctrl + F: Open a search field.**
- **Ctrl + P: Print a document or page.**
- **Ctrl + Shift + T: Bring a previously**

Find us online at
NJAEOP.net

5 Workplace Obstacles that Secretaries Must Overcome by Owen Reed

Most of the time, when people think about secretaries, they have out-of-date assumptions about what it means to be a corporate secretary. However, in actuality, the secretary's job has changed. By more fitting job names like "personal assistant," "executive secretary," or "management assistant," the word "secretary" itself has largely been abandoned. The obstacles a secretary has at work are numerous.

Company secretaries serve as "the eyes" of the organization, working nonstop and frequently in the background. They equally fulfil the demands of the employees and the customers in addition to those of the management board. The smooth operation of the company would likely be threatened without their dedication and assistance.

The top 5 difficulties faced by secretaries at work have been listed by Owen Reed.

1. Being aware of the industry. The most important requirement for a successful company secretary is business knowledge of the organization you work for.
2. Dealing with challenging people. The first person that managers, employees, suppliers, customers, board members, and guests are likely to go to when they need something for work is a secretary. These people will generally be pleasant. Unfortunately, secretaries occasionally have to deal with persons who are more challenging to work with. These folks might view you as less important than the other workers, or they might regard you as a target for their pent-up resentment.
3. Flexibility: Taking on new challenges. In the current digital era, businesses are susceptible to constant change. Many businesses are brought to their knees by a failure to transform, increased competitive pressure, and the inability to respond swiftly and agilely to this.
4. Taking responsibility for any mishaps. Even though they may not be the ones making decisions, secretaries are typically blamed when something goes wrong. Despite not always being the cause of the issue, they are nonetheless accountable for finding a solution.
5. Time management. Managing the workload may be one of the largest issues, particularly if secretaries support multiple executives. Meeting planning, scheduling, booking travel, and other duties fall under the purview of secretaries. Successful time management and other organizational abilities are crucial for a good secretary because of the scheduling of competing executive objectives and last-minute modifications.

🔔 WANTED 🔔

Educational Office Professionals Ready to Lead

The New Jersey Association of Educational Office Professionals (NJAEOP)

is actively seeking **new Executive Board members** to help shape the future of our organization.

We currently have **vacant positions**—and this is your opportunity to step up, get involved, and make an impact.

✓ **If you work in an educational office anywhere in New Jersey, you're eligible to join!**

✓ **No prior board experience required—just your dedication and energy.**

Join a team that supports, uplifts, and grows together.

Let your voice be part of the conversation.

Interested? Reach out today!

We'd love to welcome you to the NJAEOP leadership team.

Check out our affiliate
National Association of Educational
Professionals (NAEOP)
at

<https://www.NAEOP.org/>

Learn about more stipends you can earn, attend conventions and more!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

**FILL OUT THIS SHORT SURVEY
AND
TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**



REMINDER

If you haven't already paid your dues for 2025-2026, a membership form is provided for your convenience. Please fill it out and forward it with a check in the amount of \$20, make checks payable to NJAEOP and send to:

Denise Lambert, NJAEOP Membership
Chairperson
53 Watson Avenue
West Orange, NJ 07052



<https://njaeop.org>

New Jersey Association of Educational Office Professionals
Service * Integrity * Skill

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR 2025-2026

YEARLY MEMBERSHIPS RUN FROM **JULY 1st TO JUNE 30th**

LAST NAME _____ FIRST NAME _____ MI _____

POSITION _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

COUNTY _____ DISTRICT _____

EMAIL: _____ (Required)

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP \$20.00_____
RETIRED ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP \$15.00_____
RENEWAL \$20.00_____

RETIRED ASSOCIATE (NON-VOTING) \$10.00_____
FRIEND OF NJAEOP (NON-VOTING) \$10.00_____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

ENCLOSE CHECK/MONEY ORDER (made payable to NJAEOP) WITH THIS FORM AND MAIL TO:

Denise Lambert, NJAEOP Membership Chairperson
53 Watson Avenue
West Orange, NJ 07052

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

NJAEOP needs your support to continue our programs designed for the Educational Office Professional
to keep you being "the best you can be."

YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT to us - we only exist because of YOU!

YOU ARE NJAEOP!