

# NUEA

## Local Action, Activities, and Opportunities

*“In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone...*

*Wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer and there are no civil rights. We do not intend to let them do this to us. We demand this fraud be stopped. Our weapon is our vote.”*

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., speaking about right-to-work laws in 1961.

## Where do you go with QUESTIONS?

NUEA not only bargains your contract. They also help improve learning conditions, curriculum, professional development, and community initiatives. The following information list represents a small portion of current NUEA projects and their contacts.

Title	Name	Information
Grassroots Political Advocate	TBA	Questions about political candidates, issues, and action (use home e-mail accounts)
Recording Secretary	Christel Mauloff	Questions about the meeting minutes
Stipend Co-Chair	Dan Iverson (North)	Questions about the stipends review process and related research
Elementary Executive	Eric Dahn (Mill Street)	Questions about elementary-specific issues
Junior High Executive Region 39 Chair	Rob Hunt (Lincoln)	Questions about junior-high specific issues Questions about Region 39
High School Executive	Christine Bell (Central)	Questions about high-school specific issues
Elections Chair	TBA	Questions about the NUEA or Region 39 elections process
2nd Vice President	Dan Iverson (North)	Questions about the Naperville Unit Political Action Committee for Education (NUPACE)
Treasurer Membership Chair	Vicky Curless (Kennedy)	Questions about NUEA finances and membership
Communications Region 39 Treasurer	Dave Carroll (Madison/ Maplebrook)	Questions about the web site or newsletter Updated members' home e-mail lists Questions about Region 39 finances
1st Vice President Contract Negotiations Chair	Kyle Adams (Mill St.)	Questions about bargaining or our contract Questions about special education Questions about evaluations
President, NUEA	Ross Berkley (Bond Street)	Disciplinary meetings Contract interpretation
UniServ Director	Julie Resh-Jelliff (Bond Street)	Administrative abuses or harassment Legal referral Remediation plans

## Odds and Ends You Should Know

**Danielson Evaluation Format:** District 203 uses the Danielson framework as the basis of certified staff evaluations. You will receive more training on the Danielson model throughout your new teacher induction and mentoring sessions. The key points to remember are:

1. Evaluations are based on evidence, not hearsay. Provide documentation (records, lesson plans, photos, student artifacts, etc.) whenever possible.
2. Evaluations are holistic, not item-specific. No one item should make or break your evaluation. Don't expect that excellence in a single descriptor means you are an excellent overall teacher. Be sure to read and re-read all of the descriptors and attempt to attend to as many as you can.
3. Evaluations have a strict timeline by law. Do not procrastinate in submitting your paperwork.
4. The final rating on your evaluation cannot be changed or grieved. However, the process can. If you disagree with the rating, you have 10 days to write a rebuttal. If there was an issue with the evaluation *process*, contact the NUEA president immediately.

**Career 203:** Career 203 is the professional development incentive framework for District 203. To be eligible to fully participate, **you must have your Master's degree.**

Career 203 was jointly developed by District 203 and the NUEA in order to provide a point-based system for advancing lanes through the salary schedule. Prior to Career 203, the only way a certified staff member could advance was by successfully taking graduate level coursework. Now, staff members may do practically anything that helps them grow professionally, including action research, committee participation, pilot studies, district training, coursework, and more. Educators are encouraged to be creative in finding professional growth opportunities most relevant to them.

Many of the options for Career 203 advancement are free to the teacher, unlike graduate-level coursework.

Keep in mind that your building administrator can make recommendations to help you determine a successful career path. However, an administrator cannot deny your path. Your path is your choice as a professional educator.

**District 203 Insurance:** District 203, NUEA, NUMA, NESPA, and NTA operate a self-funded, self-managed benefit program that is administered through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. A joint committee annually reviews premiums and benefits to best meet the needs of D203 employees. Our plan includes four medical/RX plan choices (Platinum, Platinum Narrow-Network, Gold, and Gold Narrow-Network), all of which include vision and dental benefits. New employees have 31 days to enroll, and returning employees must re-enroll annually during the open enrollment period (mid-October through mid-November). **Members MUST notify the district of an IRS recognized change-of-life event within 31 days (e.g., birth of a child, marriage, spousal job change, divorce, or death).**

\*\*\* [District 203 Benefit Guide](#) \*\*\*

<https://tinyurl.com/203BenefitGuide2024>

**Teladoc:** District 203 subscribes to the Teladoc service (teladoc.com) which allows you **and your family** to skip urgent care or the ER for common ailments by phone, web site, or app! Teladoc Services include both physical and behavioral options. All services are managed by professionals in each field.

For the medical portion, the doctors include practicing PCPs, pediatricians, dermatologists, and family medical physicians. Teledoc doctors can write prescriptions. The behavioral health providers are experienced psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, and social workers.

**True story:** One NUEA member called while on vacation. The doctor gave a prescription, which the member picked up immediately at a local pharmacy!

Medical	Behavioral
Cold, flu symptoms	Anxiety, Depression, Abuse
Allergies, Bronchitis, Sinus	Financial Counseling
UTI's, ear infections	Marriage Counseling
Sprains and strains, and more!	Social Workers, and more!

Be sure to preregister on the Teledoc website NOW, and save this number on your phone: **1-800-Teladoc**

## FMLA Information

Public elementary and secondary schools must abide by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). FMLA provides employees with certain protections should they need to take a leave of absence from work.

Only **eligible employees** are entitled to FMLA benefits. Employees must:

- Work for their employer for at least 12 months
- Work at least 1,250 service hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the leave

Eligible employees may take up to **12 work weeks** of leave in a 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The **birth** of a child or the placement of a child with the employee for **adoption or foster care** (FMLA explicitly permits either parent to take up to 12 weeks of leave any time within the first year following the birth or adoption of a child, without requiring documentation from a physician.)
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform certain essential functions of their job
- For any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, parent is a military member covered on active duty or call to covered active duty status
- For a married couple employed by the same employer, the employer can restrict FMLA benefits to 12 weeks combined, unless the leave is to care for a seriously ill child

FMLA benefits are applied **only during the period in which an employee is scheduled to work**. Winter break, spring break, summer break, district-observed holidays, and weekends are not scheduled work days for the majority of education employees, and therefore are not included as FMLA benefits.

Under some circumstances, employees may use FMLA on an **intermittent** or reduced schedule basis. When leave is needed for planned medical treatment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations.

The employer is allowed to require an employee to use accumulated sick leave (or sick leave bank) during a leave. Sick leave and/or sick leave bank days cannot be used to extend the period of leave beyond the provisions of FMLA.

Employers are required to continue group health care insurance coverage for an employee on leave under the same terms and conditions prior to the leave.

Employees who wish to use their FMLA benefits are encouraged to call Tiara Morris at 630-420-6614.

## Weingarten Rights: For Your Protection

*A bargaining unit (NUEA) member is entitled to union representation in an investigatory meeting where the employee reasonably believes that he/she will be disciplined (including a reprimand, letter in your file, loss of privileges, suspensions, deduction of pay, or termination).*

- The employee **MUST** request representation. The administrator does not have to “suggest” that a representative be present.
- An employee should never refuse to meet or waive his/her right to representation.
- If compelled to meet without representation, the employee should refrain from answering substantive questions.
- Administrators must tell you the topic of the meeting prior to the meeting.
- An employee is innocent until proven guilty, and the burden of proof is on the administration.
- The employee and the union have a right to all information in which management is basing their discipline (no “hidden letters” or anonymous complaints).
- Employees are highly encouraged to rebut any negative information that is placed in their file within 10 days. Without a rebuttal, no challenge may be made if a termination is requested.

### Weingarten Rights

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working condition, I respectfully request that my union representative or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

# Common Fallacies and Potential Trouble Areas

## The Social Media Fallacy

**Fallacy:** Many teachers feel it is within their first amendment rights to post or discuss any topic they choose on Facebook, X, Instagram, Spotify, Blogspot, or any other social media outlook.

**Reality:** Your first amendment rights only protect you from governmental interference or punishment, not employer interference or punishment. As an employee of District 203, you must adhere to the standards of professionalism as established by your employer and your association. District 203 employees HAVE been reprimanded and even terminated because of a negative social media post. You are not protected in this event.

**Advice:** Please set your accounts to “private” and carefully monitor who you allow access to your site. Do not allow parents or students access to your personal social media sites. Do not “friend” your students. Do not talk about your students in your updates. And choose your words wisely if you wish to criticize your employer in writing on any online platform.



## The Sick Day Fallacy

**Fallacy:** I have 15 sick days. I’d like to use a sick day whenever I want to, even if I’m not really sick.

**Reality:** Abuse of sick days is unethical and unfair. However, you CAN schedule a sick day in advance for doctors’ appointments. The district has the right to ask for a doctor’s note after three consecutive sick days. If they find you abused a sick day, you can lose your pay for that time period (around \$280/day for an early-career educator), receive a letter of reprimand, and/or be terminated. Bereavement days are included as sick days, but do not require a doctor’s note after three days. Also, 15 days includes up to five days that may be used to help maintain your mental health.

**Advice:** Only take a sick day when you are physically or mentally ill, when a loved-one who requires your care is ill, when you have an unavoidable medical appointment, or when there is a death in your family.

## The Political Speech Fallacy

**Fallacy:** I can use school time and resources to promote my favorite political candidate. I send out information using my school e-mail account and the school copy machine.

**Reality:** You can't use school equipment, school time, or your personal plan time to promote specific candidates or positions. This includes REPLYING TO or FORWARDING a political e-mail sent to your school email address. It also includes using district mailboxes to pass out political flyers advocating for a specific position, candidate, or political party.

**Advice:** You may wait until after school hours to advocate for your candidates and pass out flyers that you have copied from a shop outside the district. Do not reply to political e-mails. Only use your personal e-mail account, contact lists, and social media if you have a political candidate or topic for which to advocate.

## The Defined Contribution Fallacy

**Fallacy:** I would rather invest my retirement savings in a **defined contribution** plan, where I get to control where my money is invested. This is similar to a 401(k) or 403(b) plan.

**Reality:** You currently have a **defined benefit** plan (TRS), in which you earn a predetermined benefit when you retire. The amount is based on a percentage of your income, and in Illinois, is earned in lieu of Social Security. Your benefit does not diminish if the market crashes or you run out of savings. The Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) collects contributions, manages investments, and pays retirees.

**Advice:** The state has historically and systematically failed to pay its share of TRS pension contributions. As a result, Illinois owes TRS over \$118 billion. Some have suggested eliminating TRS and instead offering **defined contribution** plans, in which members invest their own savings in 401(k) or 403(b) programs as they see fit.

There are a number of problems with this solution. First, simply switching plans does not diminish the unfunded liability, nor does it change the irresponsible spending policies that created the mess in the first place. Second, the cost to administer hundreds of thousands of 403(b) portfolios is enormous when compared to managing the combined assets and power of TRS. Members would pay more for less. Lastly, 401(k) and 403(b), or **defined contribution**, programs were designed to supplement a **defined benefit**-type program like social security. In no way should they ever be used as the sole retirement income in the absence of social security.

Keep in mind that investing in a 403(b) or 457(b) program **in addition to** TRS is your choice as a District 203 employee, and we do recommend it. District 203 has nearly a dozen entities that can set up a plan that suits your needs. For more information, please contact Michelle Wavering at [mwavering@naperville203.org](mailto:mwavering@naperville203.org)



# NUEA Scholarship Winners 2016-2020

2016



Emily Forsythe

Kurt Simpson

Ashlyn Bell

2017



Philip Dohm  
WNHS

Maddison Paladino  
DGSHS

Whitney Smith  
NNHS

2018



Eddie Forsythe,  
Holt Valley H.S.

Esther Park,  
Naperville Central H.S.

Anna Seaton,  
Naperville Central H.S.

2019



Colin Iverson

Evie Dohm

Jillian Paladino

Alexis Henz

2020



Maria Gabrieli,  
NCHS

Kathryn Southon,  
NCHS

Mordecai Park,  
NCHS

Alexis Henz,  
North Central College

# NUEA Scholarship Winners 2021-2024

2021



Madeline Sniadecki

Zack Stokes

Samantha Weigel

Kayla Hoffman

2022



Adam Johnson  
Neuqua Valley HS

Christopher Comer  
Naperville Central HS

Garrett Dahn  
Naperville North HS

Cora Ondrus  
Quincy University

2023



Mark Park  
Naperville Central

Felicity Abbott  
Glenbard South

Elijah Matas  
Lake Park

Maria Gabrieli  
Loyola University

2024



Grace Brady  
Neuqua Valley H.S.

Luke Moen  
Naperville Central H.S.

Ellie Nungaray  
IMSA

Grace Lueken  
Loyola University