

THE UNITED NEWSLETTER



LOCAL 15-175 NYSUT LOCAL 3072 AFT

September 2012

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From The Desk of the President:

Welcome back. As we get ready for another productive school year, we need to remember our brothers and sisters across the state that were not fortunate enough to return to their positions. Many of us may be starting this year with anxiety and questions about how to move forward. You are not alone in your feelings. We are at the threshold of a new state evaluation system, as well as, starting the year under our existing contract. On top of that, some of our administrators are changing locations and we are welcoming a new principal at Fox Meadow.

The Executive Board and I have worked through the summer to strategize how to move forward. I, myself, have had several meetings at Building A over the summer and have

been in contact with our NYSUT Labor Relation Specialist about many things.

One example was a meeting with Dr. Langlois and John McCarthy. This meeting was to convey feelings many of us have about the lack of understanding and compassion we feel BOCES has shown over the past couple of years. The meeting was fairly productive, and we all understand that we need to foster the relationships that have been built over the years with BOCES. We need to open the communication channels more effectively and return to the values that made BOCES what it is today. This needs to be a group effort on all parties involved. We cannot rebuild these relationships alone. Everyone needs to contribute, from administrators to teachers and everyone in between.

The first thing we need to do is rebuild the unity within our union. The Executive Board is restructuring to better facilitate our roles. The program reps will also be taking on

more of a leadership role within each building. We cannot function as a unit cohesively with the same old attitude of blaming the union if something goes wrong. You are the union! We need to work on building our solidarity, not complaining about it. When we rebuild the connections that were once strong, it will echo throughout BOCES and hopefully have a positive affect on administration to build similar bonds within their structure.

This BOCES is revered by many as a leader in CTE, Special Education, and Alternative Schooling. Together, I feel we can truly bring BOCES back to the family it once was. Have a happy school year!

In solidarity,
Larry Marino



Conducting Union Business:

Student learning and achievement is the main concern in our ever changing 21st century education system. During the workday, we, as teachers, aides, assistants, nurses, therapists, are obligated to support school and student's improvement and success. This cannot be accomplished when union business is conducted during the workday.

All union business should be handled before or after the members primary work day.

Any union related issue should be addressed to the union administration before moving forward. This protocol, which has been in place for many years, is to protect the integrity of the union as a whole. Any person who is voicing an opinion and making statements to other parties should make it clear that they are speaking for themselves only.

Especially during a contract year it is very important not to give administration the idea that we are not united. We, as an organized labor force, need to be aware that one person's opinion and even actions can reflect on the entire membership in a positive or negative light. If anyone has any union related issue(s) that they feel need to be addressed, please do so by contacting the union administration first.

Aetna Health Benefit Update:

The following notice has been placed on the BOCES' website.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE PNW HEALTH BENEFITS CONSORTIUM

The Putnam/ Northern Westchester Health Benefits Consortium has been informed by Aetna that the Health Quest System, which includes Northern Dutchess Hospital, Putnam Hospital Center and Vasser Brothers Medical Center will leave the Aetna network effective September 1st.

A letter about this was sent by Aetna to members who visited these facilities twice within the past 12-months.

The Health Quest facilities are important to our members and we are attempting to intervene so an agreement may be reached prior to September 1st. We will post future developments on the situation to this website. If you have questions, you may call the Risk Management Department at [\(914\) 248-2456](tel:9142482456).

Welfare Fund Information:

Updated Welfare Fund Benefit Booklets:

The Trustees of the USA Welfare Fund have completed an updated version of the Benefit Booklet, including recent benefit improvements. You should have received your copy at your home address from our Fund Administrator, Daniel H. Cook. The Benefit Booklet is also available online at <http://ny.aft.org/pnwb>

As a reminder, you can access your Welfare Fund account information at www.dhcook.com to check claim status, obtain forms, etc.

The Trustees of the Welfare Fund are available as a resource and can be reached via their BOCES email.



Know Your Contract:

SECTION IX - PERSONAL BUSINESS LEAVE

Personal business leave shall be granted upon application to and approval by the Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services. Except for emergencies, written application must be received in the Human Resources and Administrative Services Department at least three working days in advance of the day for which leave is requested.

Personal business leave shall not be accumulated from year to year nor shall it be used to extend vacation or holidays.

What this means:

Personal days, which are within the parameters of the language above, do not need to have supporting documentation, just a reason for the day. If the request for the leave is less than three working day notice, you may be asked for further documentation to have the day approved.

Any personal day, be it compelling or not, shall not be used before or after any scheduled vacation or holiday.

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR):

The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) guidelines are mandated by the state. This new evaluation system is supposed to be in place for this school year. Our union is represented on this committee by three other union members, besides myself. We have been working for the past two years, including summers, to put together an evaluation system that is practical and equitable to all involved.

Currently, we have decided on and have been working with the Charlotte Danielson rubric. We have formed subcommittees within the larger committee to work on Teacher Improvement Plans (TIPS), the appeals process, and the Student Learning Objectives (SLO's).

As of today, there is nothing that has been finalized as part of our APPR, except for the use of the rubric. The APPR is being negotiated separately from the contract, so it would be possible to have an agreement on the APPR before we agree on a contract.

As of today, we will be evaluated under our existing APPR until a new one is agreed upon.

Negotiation News and Updates:

Currently, as you are aware, we will be starting the school year under our existing contract.

What this means:

Next year we will be not be receiving a percentage increase to our salaries. Anyone on the schedule that should be receiving the next step will get the step without a percentage increase on top of it. The members at the top step will only receive longevity, if they qualify, and nothing else. (To know if you qualify to receive longevity, please reference Section XXI of our contract) The rest of the contract stands, including our current 11% health contribution.

We met with the Boards team many times last year and worked to reach an agreement that is fair and equitable for both sides without any luck. We thought we were heading toward impasse, which is when a mediator steps in to resolve the issue, but both sides agreed to continue the negotiation process this year. We are optimistic we will have some type of agreement that we can present to the membership for ratification during the school year.

Look for more information in future newsletters, and as always, seek out your program reps for the correct and factual information.



Union Election Year:

This year is an election year for our union. Every elected position can be applied for. To run for one of these positions, you must be nominated at the September union meeting. For many years, our elections have run uncontested. Even though all the present elected officials are running again, it does not mean they cannot be challenged.

Current Elected Positions:

Position

President
1st VP
2nd VP
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership

Current Colleague

Larry Marino
Catherine Armisto (temporary appointment)
Doug Andreotti
Jenn Guiffre
Dan Gottfried
Debra Haggerty

Program Reps

Marie Russo
Mike Tomaseski
Lynn Magrone
Elisa Longo
Robert Angiello
Nathan Ball (temporary appointment)
Open position available

Supervisor

Steve Lowery
Jim Bellucci
Michael Sowul
Bob Kelderhouse
Marla Gardner
Clark Callahan
Mia Wrobel (District Employees)

Let's have a good turnout for the election this year!



Committee Call:

Your union needs your help. Many of you have asked over the years what you can do to help out. Moving forward, we are looking to form several committees and are in need of volunteers. The committees are listed below with a brief description of what's involved. **If you are interested in helping out on one of these committees, please let your program rep know.**

By-Law Committee: This committee will be tasked with reviewing and updating our By-Laws. Our By-laws were written many years ago. If interested in this committee, you would need to be available for several meetings throughout the year to discuss with other committee members any changes. Any changes need to be presented to the membership at a union meeting for a vote. Currently, we have a chairperson for this committee and are in need of a few members.

Social/Hospitality Committee: Currently there are two members on this committee that arrange refreshments at union meetings and send cards to members on special occasions. We are looking to expand this committee and bring back the days of the holiday soirees. We are in need of several people who enjoy planning events/parties. If interested in this committee, you would need to meet periodically throughout the year and plan and execute all functions of a social nature: holiday party, retirement party, picnics, etc.

Public Relations Committee: Currently there is one person on this committee, the editor of our newsletter. This committee would be involved with promoting the United Staff Association by communicating with local newspapers, radio, and any other available channels of communication (internet). In addition, as we move forward, our union will be reaching out to the community; it is important to get the word out about the United Staff Association as an integral part of the community.

Fundraiser Committee: This is a new committee that is in need of motivated creative people. As a union, we would like to conduct several different fundraisers throughout the year.





Union T-Shirt Information

WHEN TO WEAR YOUR T-SHIRT:

EVERY Friday

All staff meetings

Union meetings/functions

Superintendent Conference Days

Public interactions: Meet the Teacher Night/Fundraisers ect

Wearing these shirts together is a way to begin to re-build the harmony and solidarity that has been absent from our union for many years.



Labor Council Reps Needed:



The Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Body AFL-CIO (WPCLB) is an organization which represents over 120,000 union members and their families in the counties of Westchester and Putnam. The United Staff Association has the opportunity to have numerous delegates attend the WPCLB monthly meetings as well as vote on issues critical to the labor movement. This organization is an integral part of the labor movement as it solidifies our movement. In addition, it serves as a support system to members without contracts, as an educational tool for issues which impact our workplace, makes endorsements/recommendations for local and statewide elections, organizes and implements local community projects (Food Drives, Shoe Drives, Habitat for Humanity, Blood Drives, etc..) all which have a direct impact on the broader region. Meetings of the WPCLB take place the second Wednesday of each month at the labor council offices located at 595 W. Hartsdale Avenue, White Plains, NY 10607. The dues for members are fully paid by the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) so all that is needed by our membership is representation at these meetings. I encourage you to get involved in this worthwhile organization. For more information, contact Larry Marino at ext 480.





I'd like you to meet MAC.



The movement that inspired the world was born right here in New York. People standing up, standing together, and making their voices heard. If you have had enough, too, it is time for you to join that movement.

Become an e-Activist through the NYSUT Member Action Center (the MAC)!

When you become an e-Activist, you are saying that you have had enough. Enough of teacher-bashing and scapegoating. Enough of treating educators like the problem rather than the solution. Enough of lawmakers valuing tests over teachers. As the President made clear last week: we cannot test our way to a strong middle class, but we can - and must - educate our way to one.

The NYSUT Member Action Center is here to help you make your voice heard and to build the movement around the priorities that matter most to all of us: education, healthcare, and issues that affect us all as working people. It is quick. It is easy. And it can be the difference between victory and defeat on the issues you care about.

Click now to check out the MAC and become an e-Activist!

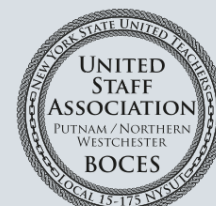
Stay informed! Get engaged! Take action! Click to view our brief video at the NYSUT Member Action Center... and take just a few seconds of your time to become an e-Activist.

Seize the moment. Join the movement.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy".

Andrew Pallotta NYSUT Executive Vice President
up now!



P.S.: I can't do this without you. Please sign

Union Representatives

Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
(914)962-9579

Executive Board:

President	Larry Marino
1st Vice President	Catherine Armisto
2nd Vice President	Doug Andreotti
Secretary	Jenn Guiffre
Treasurer	Dan Gottfried
Membership Chairperson	Debra Haggerty
Grievance Chairperson	Carolyn Schneider
Negotiations Chairperson	Al Cotoia
Building Rep Chairperson	Judy Gillet

Program Representatives:

Administrator	Representative
Jim Bellucci	Michael Tomaseski
Michael Sowul	Lynn Ammann
Steve Lowery	Marie Russo
Marla Gardner	Robert Angiello
Clark Callahan	Nathan Ball
Bob Keldershouse	Elisa Longo
Mia Wrobel	Open Position

United Staff Association Welfare Fund

c/o Daniel H. Cook Associates
253 West 35th Street, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10001

Chairperson:	Dawn Wargula
Secretary:	Nancy Finsmith
Treasurer:	Janine deGrouchy-Hraska
Trustees:	Cindy Flynn Jenn Guiffre Larry Marino Doreen Trani
Consultant:	Flo Laicher
Administrator:	Daniel Cook Associates (914) 250-0700 FAX (212) 714-1455 www.dhcook.com
Legal Fund:	(914) 997-1576 www.teacherslegalfund.com

Upcoming Meetings:

Upcoming Executive Board Meetings:

September 6, 2012

3:00 P.M.
Projects Building

Upcoming General Membership Meetings:

September 11, 2012

3:15 P.M.
Walden Adult Dining Room

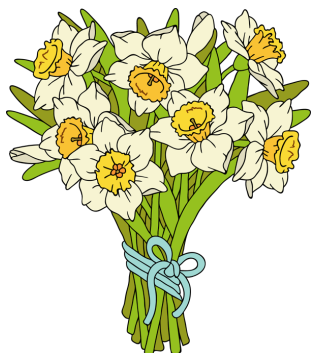


A Bouquet from Us:

Our Sympathy to...

Stephanie Alder who lost her mother.

Lynn Uchetel who lost her mother.



Send items for *A Bouquet from Us* to Elizabeth Bowler at ebowler@pnwboces.org



IMPORTANT:

Carolyn Schneider is the Grievance Chairperson. She can be reached at cschneider@pnwboces.org. Phone extension coming soon.

We are on the Web!

Visit us at: <http://ny.aft.org/pnwb/>

Thanks to all...

Thank you to everyone who contributes to this newsletter by submitting articles, important information, the bouquets or helping with the printing and/or distribution throughout the school year.

Please send retiree news for the newsletter to Wynn McCarty, wam48@aol.com or 36 Cheshire Lane Yorktown NY 10598. We want to reach out to more retirees.

Please send any information that you deem is newsletter worthy to Meredith Markolovic (Tech) at mmarkolovic@pnwboces.org.