

NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

www.nysut.org | June 2017



49%

DROP

in college
Students
enrolled in
TEACHER ED



Within the
Next Five Years

32%

of Teachers could

RETIRE

OUR STATE'S LOOMING

TEACHER

SHORTAGE



NY's
ENROLLMENT

to **GROW** by

61,000 STUDENTS

in the **NEXT 7 YEARS**

**N.Y.S.
WILL
NEED**

180

THOUSAND

Teachers in the
next decade

**MOSTLY IN
HIGH-NEEDS
SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Notice of Vacancy

SPECIAL ELECTION, BOARD OF DIRECTORS NYSUT At-Large Director ED 18 & 19

A vacancy exists on the NYSUT Board of Directors for the position of At-Large Director for ED 18 & 19, which was created by the resignation of Ed Vasta, effective May 20, 2017.

Pursuant to NYSUT Constitution, Article IX §6(o), the NYSUT Board of Directors is empowered to fill all At-Large Director vacancies that may occur between election year Representative Assemblies.

Notice is hereby given that a special election to fill the At-Large ED 18 & 19 Director vacancy will be conducted by the NYSUT Board of Directors on June 26, 2017.

The election will be by roll call vote of the members of the NYSUT Board of Directors. A majority vote is required for election. Should a second balloting be necessary to determine the results of an election, the two nominees with the highest number of votes in the first election will be nominees. In the event that there is a tie for the second highest number of votes, the candidate with the highest number of votes and all candidates tied for second shall be placed on the second ballot. The meeting must remain in session until there are no more than two candidates on the ballot, and one candidate is elected by the Board.

Nominations to fill this vacancy will be accepted in accordance with the Campaign and Election Procedures approved by the NYSUT Board of Directors for the 2017 Representative Assembly. In order to qualify for the Special Election a Nominating Petition must be fully completed and then signed by at least eight (8) NYSUT members. The completed and signed Nominating Petition must then be received by the NYSUT Elections Committee by the close of business (5 p.m.) on Monday, June 19, 2017. Any NYSUT member in good standing from Election Districts 18 & 19 may be a candidate. Nominating Petitions are available by contacting the NYSUT Elections Committee at elections@nysutmail.org or by contacting the NYSUT Office of the President at 518-213-6090, ext. 6662.

The candidate elected will serve as successor At-Large Director immediately upon being elected and continue to serve as successor At-Large Director to the conclusion of the 2020 Representative Assembly.

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Visit NYSUT ELT's certification website at <http://elt.nysut.org/certification>; contact NYSUT ELT at 800-528-6208, or eltmail@nysutmail.org for course listings and information.



For information about your individual certification needs, contact NYSED's Office of Teaching Initiatives, www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate.

ELT training for AP educators

NYSUT headquarters in Latham is the site of a four-day Advanced Placement Summer Institute, July 17-20, designed for those new to teaching AP® courses or experienced educators desiring new strategies and methods to improve their teaching. Classes are held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Course offerings include: AP® Calculus AB, AP® English Literature and Composition, AP® Environmental Science, AP® Statistics, AP® US History and AP® World History. As an approved CTLE provider, ELT courses can be used toward CTLE fulfillment. For more information or to register, visit ELT at <http://elt.nysut.org/professional-development/advanced-placement-summer-institute>.

Workshop on earth science

The New York State Museum hosts an earth science teacher workshop July 11-13 at SUNY Geneseo. The workshop provides a three-day, hands-on educational experience for New York earth science/physical setting teachers. Participants are immersed in geology and paleontology for a minimum of eight hours each day, totaling 24 contact hours of continuing education credits. Two field trips with experts help integrate learned knowledge with real world geo-paleo experiences and will assist teachers in building better rock, fossil, mineral and photo collections for use in the classroom.

Registration applications are due June 1. Go to www.nysm.nysed.gov/programs/dh-cadwell-earth-science-workshop for more information and to submit a registration application.



Celebrate Flag Day

More than 12 teachers can find tools and resources to help teach students about the history of the U.S. flag and its importance by visiting the National Education Association's web page, www.nea.org/tools/lessons/59334.htm.

You'll find images, audio files, videos and e-books to help students learn about the history of the Stars & Stripes and Flag Day — June 14 — as well as flag laws and flag etiquette. Activities and crafts, such as coloring pages, poetry, worksheets, word jumbles and word search puzzles, are also featured.

Similar resources can be found on www.sharemylesson.com, a website powered by the American Federation of Teachers.

Summer STEM programs

The 10th edition of NYSUT's SEMI High Tech U Teacher Edition takes place Aug. 22-23 at NYSUT headquarters in Latham. SEMI HTU is an interactive experience for educators that exposes them to potential careers for their students in the semiconductor and microelectronics industry. SEMI HTU is an intensive two-day, industry-led introduction to the high tech industry and identifies potential career paths and education requirements for students. The program is appropriate for elementary, middle and high school educators and school counselors. To register, go to www.nysut.org/eReg/SHTU17. For more information, call Terry McSweeney, 518-213-6000, ext. 6047 or email tmcsween@nysutmail.org.



The STEM Collaborative Summer Institute takes place July 30-Aug. 1 at SUNY Alfred College of Technology. The STEM Collaborative, composed of statewide math, science, technology and engineering associations, offers presentations geared to all learning levels. To register, go to www.nysstemeducation.org.



COMING UP

June 12-13

New York State Board of Regents meets, Albany

June 21

Last scheduled session for New York State Legislature, Albany

June 26

NYSUT Board of Directors meets, NYSUT headquarters, Latham

June 30-July 5

NEA Representative Assembly, Boston

July 10-14

NYSUT Local Action Project, Saratoga Springs

July 17-18

New York State Board of Regents meets, Albany

July 17-20

Advanced Placement Summer Institute, NYSUT headquarters, Latham

July 20-22

AFT TEACH Conference, Washington, D.C.

Aug. 4-9

NYSUT Education & Learning Trust Summer Training, NYSUT headquarters, Latham

Aug. 22-23

SEMI High Tech U Teacher Edition, NYSUT headquarters, Latham

Sept. 15-16

NYSUT Board of Directors meets, NYSUT headquarters, Latham

On the cover

Cover illustration by Dana Fournier



ANDREW WATSON

We are the
99 percent

who approve of
public education!



By **NED HOSKIN**
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

It's a record!
Never before has the public so vociferously voted its approval of public education in New York State. More than 99 percent of school districts across the state — outside of the “Big 5” cities — approved proposed district budgets in May voting. Even the districts that sought the 60 percent supermajority required to override the undemocratic tax cap gained impressive support; nine of the 12 passed.

NYSUT was involved in school board races and budget votes across the state and, among scores of victories, helped elect 27 NYSUT members to school boards via its Pipeline Project.

Make no mistake, it's all due to ever-increasing member involvement, said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

“This was an outstanding year in terms of NYSUT’s involvement,” he said. “We have shattered last year’s totals in number of volunteer calls

— calls to more than 70,200 households. That’s a 20 percent increase!”

The Pipeline Project, which prepares NYSUT members to run for public office, also made a difference. Ninety-six percent of the union-endorsed member candidates won.

Carol Blumrick, soon-to-retire president of the Royalton-Hartland Teachers Association, went through the Pipeline training earlier this year after deciding to run for school board.

“The best advice I received was to focus on one or two points in my conversations with people,” she said. The 25-year teacher focused on the coming selection of a new superintendent and imminent renovation projects, “as well as my obviously lifelong commitment to the district,” she said. And it worked. She was the leading vote-getter among five seeking three seats.

All over the state of New York, the hard work paid off, and victories offer lessons for future success.

Here are some highlights:

- The Poughkeepsie Public Schools TA was “all hands on deck” and went after the board president. Union members

identified yes voters and got them out to vote, also canvassing on weekends. All the union’s endorsed candidates won, and voters ousted the president.

- For the third year in a row, the Newburgh TA made a high volume of calls with 60–80 volunteers per night. They ran a get-out-the-vote campaign and had more than 750 identified supporters. All three of their endorsed candidates won easily.
- The Rhinebeck TA attempted a tax cap override and got a supermajority with 60.67 percent of the vote. Volunteer phone banks reached every single NYSUT member in the district making a dramatic impact in a close budget vote.
- The East Aurora Faculty Association ran a budget override campaign, too. Members did mailers, used the latest technology and good old-fashioned Saturday canvassing. They held eight phone banks, making 3,000 calls. The effort was crucial as they won the override by 61.6 percent.
- In Nassau, Westbury TA members distributed fliers, sent mailers and, with



Educators stand up for new contract

KRISTY LEIBOWITZ



Stumping for Pellegrino

Long Island teacher Christine Pellegrino, bottom left, is joined by NYSUT Board members, from top left, Don Carlisto and Wayne White, and AFT President Randi Weingarten during a get-out-the-vote effort. Pellegrino is running for state Assembly in a special election May 23. Visit www.nysut.org for updates.



Above: Hundreds rally in Lawrence, Nassau County, to support Lawrence TA members who have been working without a contract for the last six years. The local represents about 300 teachers, librarians, speech therapists and social workers.

a local coalition, held one-on-one conversations throughout the community. They flipped the board and now have four of the seven board members as endorsed candidates.

- In Suffolk, the Riverhead Central FA started with a poll in the community to determine key issues and which voters would be more sympathetic to union candidates. Members mailed and called only those targeted voters. The results were clear as all three of their endorsed candidates won.
- The Central New York region came together to ensure that Auburn passed its budget, 1,673 to 803. Members of numerous local unions made calls and spread the word to NYSUT members throughout the district.
- Endicott TA saw retired math teacher and coach Jim Truillo win 777 to 261 against an incumbent, riding high on more than 3,400 reminder calls and palm card distribution by TA members.
- In the Rochester area, multiple-year



efforts paid off for Waverly TA and Rush-Henrietta Educators Association members, who won four seats and three seats, respectively, to put union-endorsed candidates in control of their school boards.

Hearing set on Paladino's fate

State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia has called for a public hearing to help determine whether Carl Paladino should remain on Buffalo's Board of Education.

The June 22 hearing comes six months after Paladino made racially charged comments about President Obama and his wife, Michelle, during an interview for an alternative newspaper in Buffalo.

The hearing, which starts at 9 a.m. in the State Education Department building, will address a petition filed by the Buffalo school board. Though initially focused on Paladino's comments, the petition now claims Paladino violated policy by publicly disclosing details surrounding teacher contract negotiations discussed in executive session.

Elia has the authority under state law to remove a member of a school board for the willful violation of the law or neglect of duty. In all, four petitions have been filed seeking Paladino's removal. Besides the Buffalo school board's filing, petitions have also been brought by the Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization, the city's NAACP chapter, Buffalo's District Parent Coordinating Council, and the Buffalo Teachers Federation and NYSUT.

The BTF-NYSUT petition argues that Paladino's racist and hateful comments violate the state's Dignity for All Students Act, which requires school districts to ensure students have an education environment free of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Since Paladino's remarks were made public, protest rallies have been held in Buffalo by parents, teachers and community members to call for his ouster. Buffalo school board meetings over the last several months also have been repeatedly disrupted by protesters demanding he be removed.

— Matt Smith

GENDA is not about bathrooms; it's about saving lives



PHOTOS: MARTY KERINS JR

▣ Jamestown Community College student Hannah Lorenc tells Assemblyman Andrew Goodell that lives are at risk because of gender discrimination.

By Ned Hoskin
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

The students from the Pride club at Jamestown Community College had to be encouraged when Assemblyman Andrew Goodell, R-Chautauqua, said he agreed with 95 percent of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act, or GENDA.

But it wasn't enough; he said he couldn't vote for it.

"If you agree with 95 percent of this bill, that's an A plus," said student Mitchell Smigel. "That's the part of the bill that will save lives."

The 5 percent that troubles Goodell? The part that would allow people to choose bathrooms and participate in sports according to their own gender identity. But that's irrelevant when compared to what's at stake, said Hannah Lorenc, another JCC student.

"People are being murdered, and people are killing themselves," she said, because of legal discrimination.

The GENDA bill would add gender

identity and expression to the current list of classifications that are protected by state law from discrimination.

Currently, legal discrimination can occur in employment, in rentals and housing and in refusal of business and services. Transgender individuals also are not specifically protected from the threat of, and actual, physical harm.

"If you're a trans person, the state Division of Human Rights doesn't protect you," said Greg Rabb, a member of the Faculty Association of JCC. As president of the Jamestown City Council, Rabb is the only openly gay elected official in the eight counties of Western New York. "We need to separate sex from sexual orientation and gender from gender identity," he said.

The Jamestown group joined a couple hundred like-minded activists in Albany last month for the LGBTQ Day of Advocacy organized by a coalition of labor, education and social justice groups.

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Teachers Association member Cheryl Bach brought 16 high school students. The

district boasts the oldest gay student alliance in the region, dating back three decades. It was the first time they had partnered with NYSUT and the coalition.

"Our students were quite effective" in office visits, the social studies teacher said. One student shared a personal story of being physically assaulted in sixth grade due to perceived sexual identity, and it was quite emotional. The student was treated with respect in the office, Bach said, but the anecdote probably would not change a vote. Nonetheless, she said, the experience was invaluable.

"They came away feeling empowered as citizens because they met other people feeling the same things they are. The cause is huge to them, and it helped them to know they are not alone." Meeting many more seasoned activists also helped them see that it will be a long struggle, and victories may come over years and decades, Bach said.

Early in the day, NYSUT President Andy Pallotta introduced State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli to the activists. The state's top fiscal watchdog said it's time to pass GENDA, a bill that has been pending since DiNapoli was in the Legislature more than a decade ago. DiNapoli urged participants to continue and connect with lawmakers over the



▣ NYSUT First Vice President J. Philippe Abraham, who oversees the union's social justice agenda, encourages activists to share their stories with lawmakers.

Take ACTION



Go to the Member Action Center at mac.nysut.org to help pass important LGBTQ legislation in New York State.

Go to Facebook and visit: [LGBTQ Educators of New York State](https://www.facebook.com/LGBTQEducatorsNY).

long term. "Build relationships so they know who you are, and they know you are watching," he said.

Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, D-Manhattan, said it is important for LGBTQ activists to get community groups — churches, fraternal organizations, parent groups — to join them. "Partner with the people lawmakers don't expect to hear from on your issues," she said.

The volunteers also advocated for :

- An anti-conversion therapy bill. It would prevent mental health professionals from engaging in efforts to change sexual orientation and gender identity of minors. It also would expand the definition of professional misconduct with regard to mental health professionals.

- The Child-Parent Security Act, which recognizes the legitimacy of children born with the aid of assisted reproductive technology and legalizes surrogate parenting contracts. It would provide clear legal procedures to ensure that a child's relationship to his or her parents is legally recognized.

- A bill to designate all single-occupancy bathroom facilities in public places and in all public and private schools as gender neutral.

- A bill to extend the anti-discrimination protections of the Human Rights Law to cover public, as well as private, schools.

Gabriel Blau of the advocacy group Equality New York told the grassroots advocates to keep it all in perspective: "This is a coalition effort; we cannot do this alone. Everything we do is about people, not policies. ... Our work starts with, and ends with, people."

STAT!

Overdue safe staffing law critical for quality patient care

By **NED HOSKIN**
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

It's not complicated: Adequate nurse staffing is key to quality patient care and nurse retention, and inadequate staffing endangers patients and drives nurses from the profession.

Still, over many years, the state Legislature has ignored the obvious and put hospital profits over patient safety.

"It would be a win-win for them if they would just listen to the people who are doing the work on the front lines," Nancy Barth-Miller, a New York City hospital nurse, United Federation of Teachers member and NYSUT nursing leader, told Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, D-Bronx.

The Safe Staffing Ratios for Quality Care Act was the top priority for NYSUT's Health Care Professionals Lobby Day in May as nurses and other union health care professionals met with legislators to tell stories from their work experience in hospitals, home settings and schools.

"It's long overdue," said UFT member Anne Goldman, a NYSUT Board member who chairs the union's Health Care Professionals Council, to the hundreds of volunteer lobbyists-for-a-day gathered at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany.

"We have been on a journey that is undeniably essential for each of you to correctly and safely do the work we are so proud of for every patient you serve," she said. "This is the year we are going to do it!"

The bipartisan bill — with nearly 100 co-sponsors in the Assembly and nearly 30 in the Senate — would save lives by ensuring an adequate number of nurses at the bedside of patients in New York hospitals. It would establish safe nurse-to-patient ratios at all New York hospitals; require hospitals to staff units using nurses trained for that unit; require



■ Nancy Barth-Miller, a NYSUT nursing leader, asks lawmakers during Health Care Lobby Day in Albany to listen to the professionals who work on the front lines. "It would be a win-win for them," she says.

hospitals to be more transparent about their staffing levels; and set a maximum number of patients per nurse.

The grassroots activists also pushed lawmakers to support a bill to ban mandatory overtime for home care nurses. In 2008, the state banned mandated OT in hospitals and other health care institutions, but the law does not restrict the number of hours a home care nurse can be required to work. Visiting nurses can still be forced to work overtime with little or no warning. With a shortage of nurses, it happens more and more often these days.

Jacqueline Cato-Lee of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York recalled a time when her daughter, who goes to college in another state, had been injured. Cato-Lee was planning to drive to her daughter's school after work and take care of her. But, when the end of the day came, her manager told her she had to take on another shift.

"Home care is not like hospital care; in a hospital, you have back up," she said. "My work-life balance was challenged,



■ Jacqueline Cato-Lee of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York says forcing home care professionals to work overtime could jeopardize patients.

never abandon a patient."

The third bill advocated by NYSUT's health care warriors would mandate a school nurse in every school building for the Big 5 city school districts. It also would require these districts to consult with at least one professional nursing association to determine if they need more than one nurse per building.

Students in large city school districts deserve the same level of on-site medical care as students in other districts, Goldman said. By requiring at least one nurse on staff at each building, "the state will move closer toward ensuring the health and well-being of all students in the public schools," she said.



■ Activists rally the troops before they set off for meetings with lawmakers to discuss important health care issues.

I was tired, I was distracted. As a result, I could have made a mistake that could have harmed a patient," she said.

But there was nothing she could do. Nurses — in the home care setting — who refuse or decline the mandatory overtime can be charged with abandoning a patient. That's a serious charge.

"After the attack on 9/11, these nurses were the first ones to say, 'I'll go down there!'" said Angela Kuhn of the Federation of Nurses/UFT. "They would

Take ACTION

Go to the NYSUT Member Action Center at mac.nysut.org to send letters to your elected officials in support of safe staffing ratios and to end mandatory overtime for home care nurses.



Could this happen to you?

If ever faced with discipline or discharge, all NYSUT members are entitled to free legal representation from one of your statewide union's highly trained and experienced attorneys. NYSUT has more than 40 staff attorneys ready to fight for our in-service members, their locals and our retirees.

The story you are about to read is real. Any identifying information has been changed to protect the NYSUT member's identity.

The accusation

Ms. Smith is an elementary teacher. For the past 18 years, her observations and evaluations with the school district were all positive.

Ms. Smith taught approximately 400 students in more than a dozen elementary classes spanning kindergarten through sixth grade. One class turned out to be the most difficult of her career. She was faced with repeated, and near daily, behavior challenges from a small, yet disruptive group of students. The district provided her with some in-class administrative and paraprofessional support, without much improvement. Lacking, however, was effective guidance and strategies to improve student behaviors.

Toward the end of the school year, she administered the SLO Post Test to her students. She had, at the very minimum, a proctor present for each examination. During the difficult class, however, three adults were present in the room, in addition to Ms. Smith, while the test was given.

After the exam, the administrator reported testing irregularities to the principal who, in turn, reported it to Human Resources. Ms. Smith continued to administer the SLO Post Test to her remaining classes on the following three days. And, Ms. Smith continued to teach until the end of the school year. Ms. Smith denied all allegations of wrongdoing.

Due process

After a four-day hearing, with nine witnesses, more than 50 exhibits and extensive closing briefs filed by both sides, the neutral hearing officer dismissed all charges against Ms. Smith.

The hearing officer found that proof was entirely lacking to prove the serious charge of testing misconduct, and he took great exception to the district's blatant disregard for well-established principles of due process. The lack of a fair investigation was a fatal blow to the district's case.

Particularly troublesome to the hearing officer was the fact that the district simply accepted the word of a single administrator and never asked for corroboration from either staff or students. If the district had sought out other witnesses, it would have found a paraprofessional who refuted the allegation that Ms. Smith improperly assisted students during the administration of the SLO Post Test.

Basic principles of due process dictate that an employee be afforded the opportunity to give his/her side of the story. The district completely disregarded this and never interviewed Ms. Smith until after it made its decision to move forward with charges.

In her own words

Here's what the member had to say about her experience:

"I never thought anything like this could happen to me. I love my job and I love my students. I strive to do my best at my job and I do what is asked of me. I follow the rules. I feel that what happened to me was both personal and political.

"I was not aware that the union had such a strong legal department or that they would help me exercise my right to due process. I have not been in this situation before, so I did not know all that was involved. I was very scared when the situation happened. I was told that the union would provide a lawyer for me but I was also told by co-workers that I should get an outside lawyer.

"I am overjoyed that I decided to stick with the union lawyer I was assigned. She explained everything, was very helpful, knowledgeable and extremely professional. She got me through this and helped me keep my sanity.

"I know the outcome would not have been positive if it were not for union representation. I could never have fought the giants of such a large district if it were not for such a strong union legal department. When considering outside representation, I was told and I believed, that the union legal department would know more about fighting a case like mine than any outside lawyer could. The union legal department knows how this works and handled it perfectly. My career was saved because of the legal department of our union."

You can help defeat ConCon

New York's political insiders are throwing a party, and we aren't invited.

In November, voters will be asked to decide if New York will hold a convention to rewrite our constitution. This "Politicians' Convention" would be a multi-million dollar boondoggle funded by our tax dollars ... and would give Albany insiders and special interest groups the opportunity to change our state constitution to benefit themselves.

There is something YOU can do about it.

NYSUT's political team has established a dedicated action fund called the No NY Convention Fund. Contribute NOW at mac.nysut.org/donate to help us fight back!

"The challenge is that relatively few New Yorkers understand what a constitutional convention would mean, let alone what would be at risk," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

"Your contribution to the No NY Convention Fund will help us get the word out about the risks and ensure New York avoids this terrible mistake!"

Help spread the news that a ConCon — funded by taxpayers and attended by double-dipping political insiders — would threaten public education, organizing and bargaining rights, and a secure retirement for millions of New Yorkers. (See article, page 9.)

Visit nonewyorkconvention.org for more ideas to help defeat the referendum on Nov. 7!

NOTE: Contributions to the No NY Convention Fund are not deductible as

charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

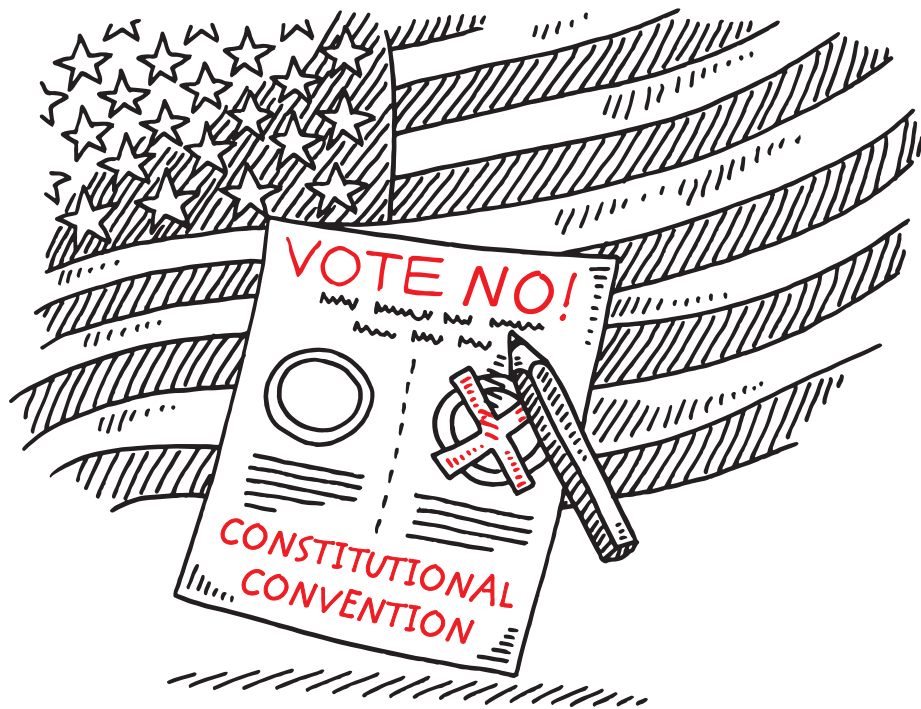


“Public employees shall have the right to be represented by employee organizations, to negotiate collectively with their public employers in the determination of their terms and conditions of employment, and the administration of grievances arising thereunder.”

§203: Right of Representation, Public Employees Fair Employment Act (Taylor Law), 1967

Open the state constitution? Heck, NO.

We have a better, cheaper way to change state's constitution



This is the eighth in a series about key reasons why an upcoming referendum to hold a state constitutional convention must be defeated. The series, "Open the state constitution? Heck, NO," examines topics — collective bargaining, public pensions, forever wild provisions, public education and social welfare obligations — that would be at risk if an expensive state constitutional convention was held. And make no mistake, a constitutional convention would cost taxpayers plenty.

By Kara Smith
ksmith@nysutmail.org

Think holding a constitutional convention is the only way to change the New York State Constitution? Think again. There's a much simpler way to amend it and, unlike the hundreds of millions a constitutional convention is estimated to cost, it doesn't cost taxpayers a thing.

State legislators routinely pass bills to make constitutional changes as part of their regular, day-to-day job responsibilities. In fact, it's been done roughly 200 times since the last major constitutional redraft in 1894.

Here's how it works:

Measures altering the state constitution must win voter approval after they are passed by two separately elected bodies of the New York State Legislature, as constitutionally required. For example, a bill approved by a legislative body elected in 2014 must also be approved by a state Legislature elected two years later, in 2016. If both legislative bodies approve the bill, it goes before voters on that year's November ballot where it must win statewide voter approval.

"This is a better way to make changes, because it provides a system of checks and balances and gives regular people a

bigger say in the amendment process," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

"Best of all, it costs taxpayers nothing."

Some recent examples of this process include:

- the statewide expansion of casino gambling;
- selling specific tracts of land within the constitutionally protected Adirondack Park; and
- a measure allowing the Senate and Assembly to go paperless, which saves more than \$325,000 annually in printing and paper costs.

Since a simpler and cheaper method exists for changing the state constitution, holding a convention is like using a slide rule to crunch numbers instead of a computer. You can do it, but why would you?

It's estimated that hosting delegates and staff in Albany for an open-ended constitutional convention would cost hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars — hundreds of millions that could be spent on education, health care, infrastructure improvements or dozens of

“ This is a better way to make changes, because it provides a system of checks and balances and gives regular people a bigger say in the amendment process. Best of all, it costs taxpayers nothing. **”**

— ANDY PALLOTTA

What you need to know

- The constitutionally required 20-year referendum to propose a constitutional convention will be on the Nov. 7 ballot.
- If it passes, three delegates per state Senate district and 15 at-large delegates — 204 in total — would be elected at the next general election, in November 2018.
- Delegates can include members of the Legislature or other elected officials, as well as political party leaders — and they can hold both positions, collecting both salaries and double pension credits.
- The convention would meet in Albany in 2019 for an unspecified duration, and then publish its suggested amendments.
- Any proposed changes are submitted to voters for approval separately or as a group for another public referendum.

Learn more about the perils of a constitutional convention and what you can do to educate yourself and others. Visit:

www.nonewyorkconvention.org
www.nysut.org/concon

other investments a lot more important to New Yorkers statewide.

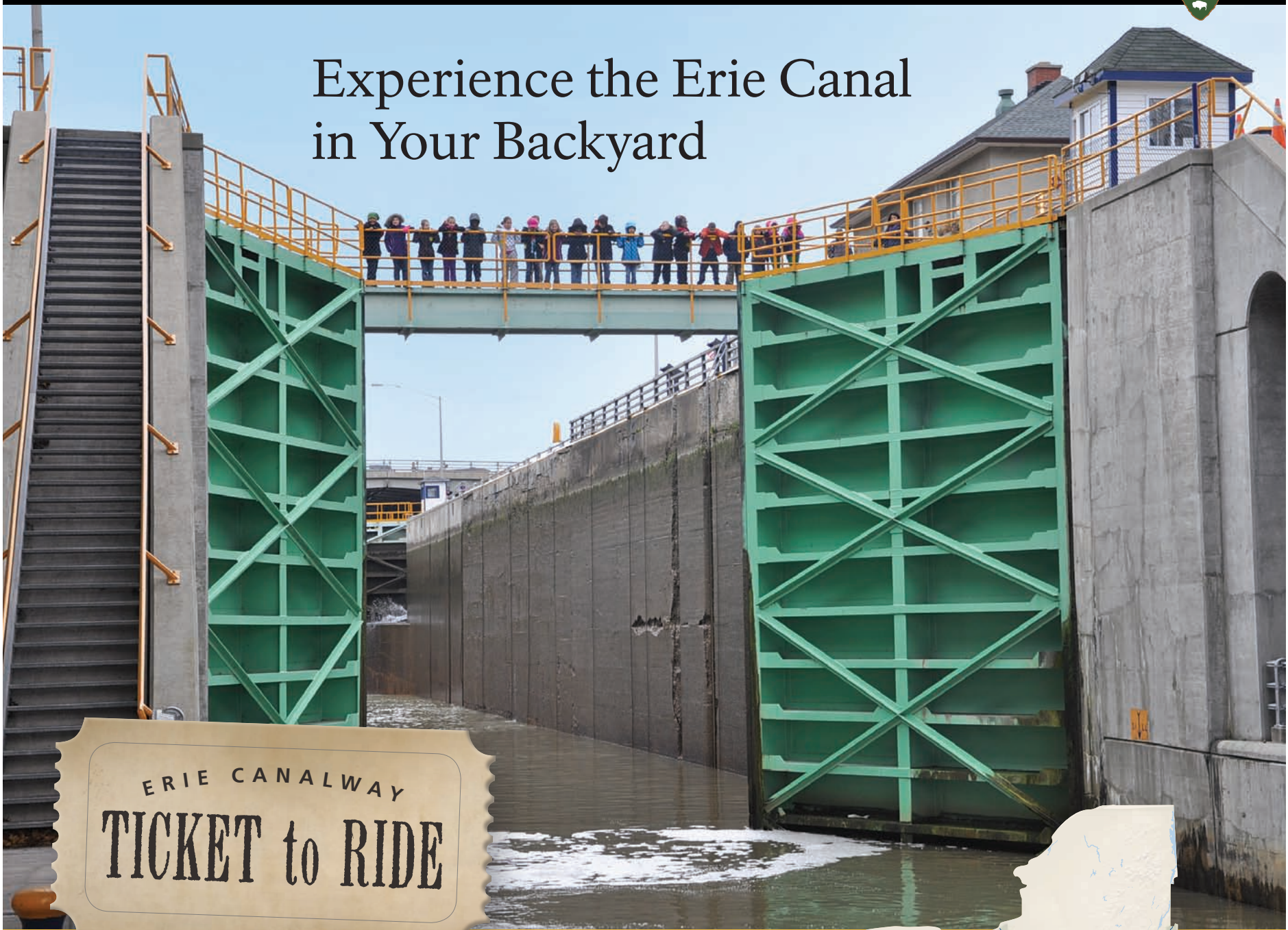
If changes to the state constitution can take place without taxpayers footing the bill for delegate salaries, travel expenses, per diems and pension costs, why have a constitutional convention at all?

It's a good question.

On Nov. 7, remember to vote NO on the constitutional convention.



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THE TRAUMA EFFECT

School culture requires sensitivity to help build students' resiliency

By Liza Frenette
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

Students carry their outside worlds into school like raindrops on a coat. And if what they carry are symptoms of trauma, cognitive and emotional problems can follow.

Left unrecognized and unaddressed, students suffering from trauma can be misdiagnosed and improperly medicated. Trauma emerges when a student's life is raked by abuse, an accident or extreme poverty; or it can be community-wide, such as when flooding destroys homes and businesses, or the local water supply is contaminated by toxins.

The need to understand the effect of trauma on students — and to create effective responses based on resiliency — is so pressing, NYSUT provided workshops on trauma awareness this spring at its Health and Safety Conference and at its annual Professionals Issues Forum on Health Care. The sessions delved into the effects of acute and complex trauma on students and best practices for developing trauma-informed schools.

Acute trauma is a single troubling event, such as a death of a parent or an injury. Complex trauma comes from chronic experiences such as long-term illness, homelessness, neglect, an incarcerated family member, prolonged exposure to violence, cyberbullying or family substance abuse. Both kinds of trauma are identified as ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, and can lead to impaired development and medical problems.

Trauma-informed schools are built on safety and trust. Teachers, health care professionals and School-Related Professionals are trained to respond in similar ways. It can start with flipping the standard question from "What's wrong with you?" to "What is happening to you?" says Colleen Condolora, a special education teaching assistant and member of the Capital Region BOCES Faculty

Association. She is also a member of NYSUT's Health and Safety Committee.

"I have had a great deal of success with many students who have experienced ACEs," she said. "It all begins with name recognition, saying hello each morning, and sharing your own vulnerabilities ... I try very hard to build their self-esteem and resiliency."

Trauma can manifest quickly and spread wildly. Winsome Brown-Cooke, a social worker and member of Hempstead Classroom Teachers Association, said students and their families in her Latino-majority district were on edge when President Trump issued a travel ban on immigrants.

Adam Piasecki, president of the Ithaca TA, attended the NYSUT workshop with several ITA social workers because he believes an increasing number of students "are having more characteristics of trauma in their lives."

Students affected by ACEs can have issues with trust, memory and organization-sensory processing, self-regulation, social skills and comprehension. They may overreact to people, loud noises and smells. They may have temper tantrums, or cut themselves.

Assessing a troubled student needs to include taking a trauma history. Without that information, "you run a great risk of leading to the wrong clinical and diagnostic mental health treatment plan," said David Wallace, LCSW, of LaSalle School in Albany, who presented at the NYSUT health care forum. The trauma history needs to be shared with everyone who comes in contact with the student each day at school, he said, so responses are uniform.

Wallace is a fierce advocate for music and art, necessities, he says, for a student's emotional health. "They develop the right side of the brain. To read, to create, for emotional regulation and problem-solving ... you need both sides of the brain developed."

To help build resiliency, Wallace suggests "little interventions," such as inviting students to help decorate classrooms, using weighted blankets instead of restraints for students who act out, letting fidgety children snap rubber bands placed between the front legs of their chair.

"The most effective approach is not to think of this as mental health problems, but as organizational and core training problems," he said. Punishment or using loud voices to reprimand is "a failed intervention. It can further aggravate neurodevelopment."

Overmedicating can also exacerbate the issues, Wallace cautioned, explaining how some traumatized children and young adults are treated with heavy medications, such as antipsychotics.

"The traumatized brain is already hyper-aroused. We're pouring (stimulants) over them," Wallace said, pointing out there are no studies on the value of using polypharmacy — the simultaneous use of multiple drugs to treat a single ailment or condition — in children.

Resiliency, he said, is stimulated by vigorous physical play, social support, healthy nutrition, sleep hygiene, help with managing stress and meaningful new learning. Transforming a school to help students with trauma begins by appointing a leader who can get trained and then train other staff, from social workers to bus drivers.

"It's a game changer," Wallace said.



ANDREW WATSON

Colleen Condolora, a member of NYSUT's Health & Safety Committee, says SRPs, teachers and health care professionals must work together to create trauma-informed schools.

13 resources ... and why

The Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" — about a teen who professes 13 reasons for committing suicide — should not be watched by "vulnerable youth, especially those who have any degree of suicidal ideation. Its powerful storytelling may lead impressionable viewers to romanticize the choices made by the characters and/or develop revenge fantasies," the National Association of School Psychologists said.

Here are 13 resources for school health professionals made available through the New York Association of School Psychologists, www.nyasp.org, all NYSUT members:

1. Reinforce that school-employed mental health professionals are available to help.
2. Youth who do view the series might need supportive adults to process it. Take the opportunity to prevent the risk of harm, and to identify ongoing social and behavior problems.
3. Take warning signs of suicide seriously; never promise to keep them secret.
4. Establish a confidential reporting mechanism for students.
5. Try to ensure that all student spaces are monitored and that school is truly safe, supportive and free of bullying.
6. Help students articulate their perceptions when viewing controversial content in shows such as this.
7. Take adolescents' concerns seriously.
8. Make sure parents, teachers and students are aware of suicide risk warning signs.
9. Avoid statements that might be perceived as minimizing a student's emotional pain (i.e., "You need to move on." "You should get over it.")
10. Reinforce resiliency factors and help the student build on them, including family support, peer support, school and community connections, a sense of purpose.
11. Help the student build easy access to effective medical and mental health resources.
12. Focus concern on the student's well-being and avoid being accusatory.
13. Schools should not glorify or accentuate a student death from suicide; promote a memorial that benefits others (i.e., donations for a suicide prevention program) and positive actions.

Yonkers teacher saluted for human rights work

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

Yonkers teacher Mitchell Polay, a longtime sixth-grade teacher at Paideia School 15, was honored recently by the Board of Regents for his outstanding work educating students — and fellow teachers — about the Holocaust and human rights.

“You understand the power of history and what effect it can have on your students,” said State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia as she presented him with the 2017 Louis E. Yavner Teaching Award at the Regents’ May meeting.

“These lessons are about more than unspeakable crimes. They also illustrate the importance of standing up and speaking out against injustice and

intolerance,” Elia said.

In his more than two decades as an educator, Polay has made history meaningful to his students, particularly through his lessons about the Holocaust. Regent Judith Johnson read a touching letter from a 13-year-old former student who said Polay’s class had deeply inspired her and made the idea of human rights “central to my life.”

In addition, Johnson noted Polay has developed a credit-bearing course for teachers called “History of the Holocaust and the Lessons We Can Learn From It,” which has been offered to hundreds of colleagues through the Richard Gazzola Teacher Center of Yonkers.

Polay, a recent graduate of the NYSUT Leadership Institute and a member of the Yonkers Federation of Teachers, said he was “thrilled to be recognized for



NYSUT

Yonkers teacher Mitchell Polay, second from left, celebrates his award with, from left, his mother, Anita Carangelo; Regent Judith Johnson; Chancellor Betty Rosa, and Commissioner MaryEllen Elia.

something I’m passionate about.”

He read a quote from Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, the Jordanian High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations: “From the earliest age,

human rights education should be infused throughout the program of every school — in curricula and textbooks, policies, the training of teaching personnel, pedagogical methods and the overall learning environment ... [Children] can be guided by human rights education to make informed choices in life, to approach situations with critical and independent thought, and to empathize with other points of view.”

“I really couldn’t have said that any better myself,” Polay said. “Please encourage human rights education. Please help us inspire our students to be upstanders. And please challenge us to treat everyone with dignity, respect and kindness.”

For more information on the Yavner award for K-12 teachers, go to www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/Yavner/.

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1. Say farewell to the Common Core Learning Standards. Here come the state's "Next Generation Learning Standards." The proposed new standards, which describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at various grade levels in English language arts and math, were presented to the Board of Regents at its May 9 meeting.

2. The revamped and renamed standards were drawn up by more than 130 educators and parents over a two-year process. The review committees included 94 teachers; 21 administrators; three library media specialists; four college professors; and 16 parents. No testing companies were involved in the standards revision sessions.

3. Committees reviewed more than 4,100 public comments and considered extensive feedback from experts in child development, English language learners and students with disabilities. Committees went standard-by-standard, grade-by-grade. Some learning standards were thrown out; others were merged; some standards were moved to different grade levels.

4. In response to negative feedback that some of the Common Core's early grade standards were not age-appropriate, an Early Learning Standards Task Force with 30 educators and parents issued a set of pre-K-2 recommendations, such as incorporating "play" as an instructional strategy.

5. The new standards meet the 2015 state law requirement that the Common Core Standards be reassessed with stakeholder input. The revised standards include many of the recommendations issued by the Governor's Common Core Task Force in December 2015. Commissioner MaryEllen Elia, who served on the Common Core Task Force, launched SED's extensive review and vowed that changes would not be rushed through like last time.

6. A significant change to the ELA standards includes encouraging a more healthy balance of informational reading and literary texts to ensure students read both full-length texts and shorter pieces, as well as to encourage reading for pleasure. Specific reading selections will be local decisions chosen by local educators.

7. To provide more time for students to develop deep levels of understanding of math content, the review committees suggested major grade movements in statistics and probability at the middle level and in algebra at the high school level. Some changes are semantic. For example, the new standard calls for "exploring" a concept without the expectation of mastering the concept at that grade level.

8. The full text of the revised standards are available at www.nysed.gov/aimhighny. NYSED is accepting public comment on the revised standards through June 2. It is expected the Regents will vote on adopting the standards at the June 12-13 meeting.

9. Once the Regents approve the new standards, the State Education Department will work with district superintendents, the Staff and Curriculum Development Network and teacher centers to develop and provide guidance on professional development for teachers to implement the new standards. Additional resources will include clear communications for parents; resources for English language learners and students with disabilities; a glossary of terms; and crosswalks to show the main differences between the new standards and the 2011 standards.

10. Unlike last time, students will not be tested on the new standards until teachers have a chance to incorporate the new standards into new curriculum. As SED's timeline shows, initial implementation of the new standards will be coupled with professional development during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. The first year of revised grade 3-8 ELA and math state assessments is slated for 2019-20.

Revision and implementation timeline

Fall 2015

AimHighNY survey and public comment

December 2015-February 2016

Department and educator workgroups analyze AimHighNY results

March-August 2016

Standards review committees

September-November 2016

Public comment on revised standards

November 2016-April 2017

Final standards revisions

Beginning April 2017

Curriculum revisions occur throughout the state

May 2017

Consideration by the Board of Regents

School years 2017-18 and 2018-19

Professional development and initial implementation of new standards

School year 2019-20

First year of revised grade 3-8 ELA and math state assessments.

Source: State Education Department

DANGER AHEAD

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

In Nevada, the teacher shortage is so acute the superintendent launched a “Calling All Heroes” recruitment campaign by dressing up as Clark Kent and zip-lining over a street in downtown Las Vegas. In California, lawmakers are considering giving teachers a series of tax breaks, including a state income tax exemption, if they remain in the profession more than five years. In the Midwest, districts are putting up billboards in neighboring states and offering hiring bonuses to entice out-of-state teacher applicants.

Here in New York, the situation is not yet that dire, but the storm clouds are swirling.

As baby boomer teachers retire, and more and more teachers leave the profession for other reasons, enrollments in teacher education programs are plummeting.

The ominous numbers, included in a new fact sheet prepared by NYSUT’s Research and Educational Services, are telling:

- More than 50,000 active State Teachers’ Retirement System members are older than 55, according to the 2016 NYSTRS annual report. Within the next five years, TRS projects more than one-third of the nearly 270,000 active members could be eligible to retire.

- The average age of teachers in the state is 48.

- Since 2009-10, enrollment in teacher education programs in New York has decreased by roughly 49 percent — from more than 79,000 students to about 40,000 students in 2014-15. Anecdotally, teacher education programs report those numbers have declined further in the last two years.

- An estimated 10 percent of New York teacher education graduates are leaving the state for employment elsewhere, with many blaming the state’s cumbersome certification system.

- Eleven percent of New York teachers leave their school or profession annually, according to a recent report by the Learning Policy Institute. Those numbers go up for early career teachers and those working in high-poverty areas. About 55 percent cited professional

Severe teacher shortage looms for New York State

frustrations, including standardized testing, administrators or too little autonomy. About 18 percent cited financial reasons and job insecurity, according to LPI.

- The U.S. Department of Education estimates that 1.6 million new teachers will be needed nationally between 2012 and 2022; LPI estimates the nation will need about 300,000 new teachers per year by 2020.

- SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher predicts New York will need more than 180,000 new teachers in the next decade. Aside from filling the thousands of vacant positions, many districts are looking to restore teacher positions and programs that were cut during the Great Recession. A New York State School Boards Association analysis found that the number of public school teachers decreased by nearly 11 percent from 2006-07 to 2014-15.

- At the same time, the federal government projects New York’s student enrollment will grow by 2 percent by 2024, with high-need school districts experiencing the largest increases.

“When you look at all these numbers together, it’s really the perfect storm for an upcoming teacher shortage crisis,” said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, who oversees NYSUT’s Research and Educational Services Department. “We need to raise awareness on the issue — and work with higher ed and others to attract more students and adults to the profession.”

At a meeting this spring with NYSUT local leaders, State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said finding ways to recruit and retain teachers must be front and center.

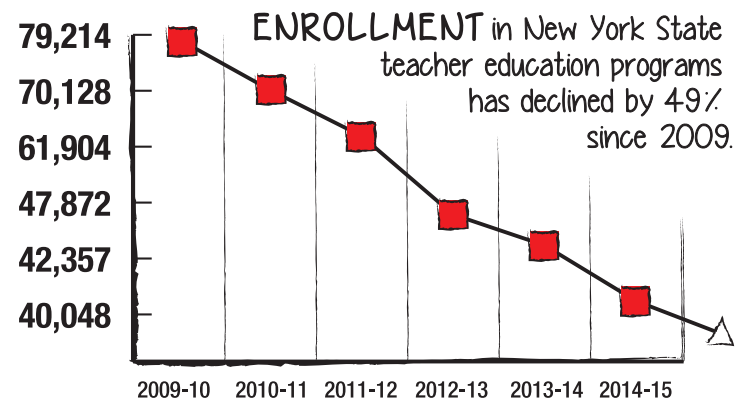
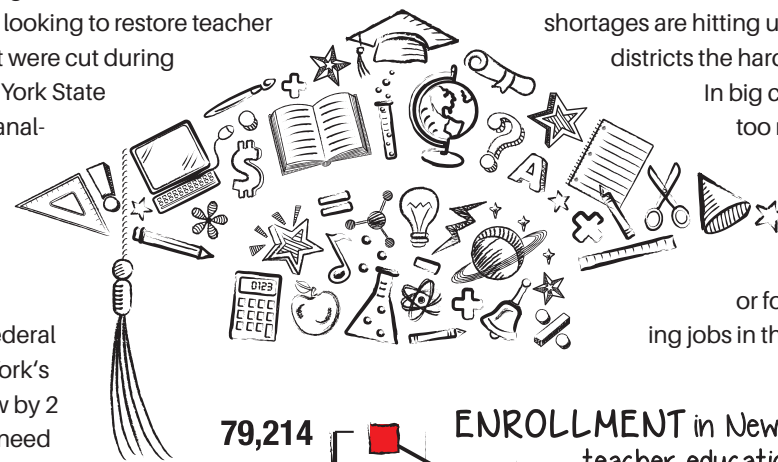
In many parts of the state, the shortage is already manifesting:

In November 2013, SED reported the following statewide teacher shortage areas between 2010 and 2014: bilingual education, chemistry, CTE, earth science, English language learners, Languages

other than English, library and school media specialist, physics, special education, special education – bilingual, special education – science certification, and technology education. In New York City, SED identified shortage areas that include the arts, biology, chemistry, CTE, English, health education, library media specialist and mathematics.

SED’s “Teacher Supply and Demand Report,” has not been updated since 2013. However, anecdotal evidence shows New York’s current teacher shortages are hitting urban and rural districts the hardest.

In big city districts, too many newly hired teachers are leaving out of frustration or for higher-paying jobs in the suburbs. “In

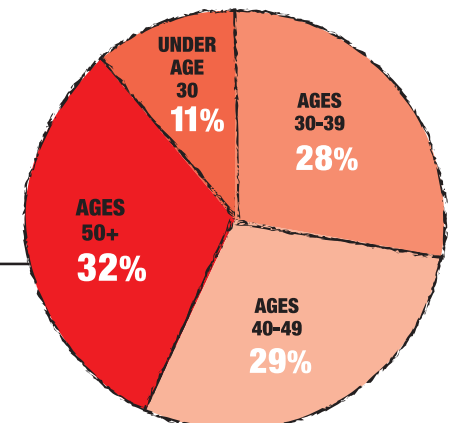


SOURCE: NYS Department of Education

266,350 Active members in the NYSTRS as of June 2016.

Active members who could retire within the next five years.

SOURCE: NYSTRS



Removing roadblocks on the path to teaching

NYSUT is committed to advancing solutions to the state’s looming teacher shortage — a complex problem that requires comprehensive remedies.

“We are developing what will be a long-term campaign that will attract bright, talented, dedicated students and adults to the profession,” said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. “As a teacher, I can say with confidence that we enter our profession inspired by a love for what we do. That hasn’t changed. But the next generation faces unprecedented roadblocks on the path to teaching. NYSUT has made progress in tackling some of these road blocks — yet more needs to be done.”

Working with United University Professions and the Professional Staff Congress, NYSUT’s higher education affiliates, the statewide union spear-headed recent improvements to the

teacher certification process. Similarly, the union’s success in standing up to the state’s “test-and-punish” approach to teacher evaluations has improved the climate for teaching and learning, but much work remains.

DiBrango said the union’s research arm is developing a statewide inventory of district and campus programs with proven success in recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers.

“There are many strong programs for mentoring and providing ongoing support to future teachers, but in too many cases they are starved of resources,” DiBrango said.

Jamie Dangler, vice president for academics of UUP, NYSUT’s affiliate at SUNY, agrees: “SUNY has many quality programs — developed in collaboration with local districts and dedicated to mentoring teachers — but a lack of resources limits their reach.”

In a recent meeting with leaders of the Syracuse TA, DiBrango embarked on what will be continuing conversations across the state with members and leaders on educational issues, including the teacher shortage.

Syracuse TA President Megan Root said the shortage is already on many districts’ doorsteps.

“We have had a hard time recruiting,” Root said. Strategies to attract and keep staff include an improvement in starting salary and an urban fellowship program that holds great promise for teacher retention.

“NYSUT is launching our campaign for the long haul,” DiBrango said. “We know we can’t solve this

problem alone, and we know we’re not alone in this work. Together with our locals, we’ll identify and advance ways to encourage kids to go into the profession and help them along the way.”



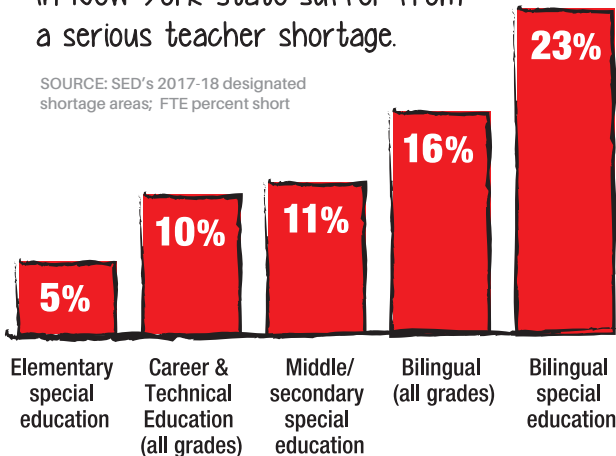
STEVE JACOBS

■ NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, right, walks with Nicole Capello, vice president of Syracuse TA, during a recent visit with teachers and students at the Salem Hyde Elementary School.

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FIVE CRITICAL CERTIFICATION AREAS in New York State suffer from a serious teacher shortage.

SOURCE: SED’s 2017-18 designated shortage areas; FTE percent short



What do you think?

We want to hear from you: What are the best ways to bring in and support the next generation of teachers? Do you have existing programs in your districts or colleges to support teacher recruitment, preparation and retention? How can the union partner with you and your students to encourage them to go into the profession? What would you say to encourage future teachers?

Go to www.nysut.org to submit comments, or post on our Facebook page — www.facebook.com/NYSUTUnited.

exit interviews, these educators cited a variety of reasons, but first and foremost, they found the difficult working conditions and lack of support too overwhelming,” said Karen Alford, vice president of elementary education for the United Federation of Teachers.

Rural districts are also having a tough time recruiting and retaining staff. It used to be that local SUNY colleges provided a steady pipeline, but that’s not the case anymore — especially for high-need subject areas.

At a meeting with Assemblywoman Addie Jenne, D-Theresa, North Country leaders lamented that undergraduate education majors at SUNY Potsdam numbered only 216 in fall 2016 compared to 729 undergrad education majors in 2010.

“One of my biggest frustrations right now is we have already been contacted about a dozen (local) openings for math teachers and we are only going to have three [math] graduates this year,” said SUNY Potsdam Secondary Education Department Chair Peter Brouwer, a member of United University Professions at SUNY Potsdam.

Working with K-12 members, UUP at SUNY and the Professional Staff Congress at CUNY, NYSUT is developing a long-term campaign to raise

awareness about the issue and offer solutions. For example, research has shown that strong support for beginning teachers can reduce a teacher’s odds of leaving the profession in the first year from 41 percent to 18 percent, DiBrango said. This could include mentoring programs, shared planning time and resources, such as a teacher aide or teaching assistant.

In a major win for union and higher education activists earlier this spring, the Regents approved significant changes to begin fixing the state’s new teacher certification process, which was discouraging many students from entering the profession.

The Regents eliminated one of four certification exams and called for further study of a new review process to help candidates successfully complete the edTPA, and creation of a clinical practice workgroup to review the length and requirements of student teaching.

“Our work on the teacher certification process shows what can happen when we speak out and advance solutions that are fair and make sense,” DiBrango said. “We need to do everything we can to demonstrate what an incredibly rewarding profession teaching is and that those who make it their life’s work will never regret it.”

'Grow your own'

Buffalo launches high school program for aspiring teachers



BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

□ Theresa Harris-Tigg, a Buffalo State professor and city school board member, left, and Phil Rumore, president of the Buffalo Teachers Federation, announce the launch of the Urban Teacher Academy at McKinley High School.

By Sylvia Saunders
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

Buffalo Teachers Federation President Phil Rumore is excited about a new “grow your own” teacher preparation program — the Urban Teacher Academy.

Starting this fall, a cohort of ninth-graders in the city’s McKinley High School will embark on a four-year program of career-focused classes that introduces them to the teaching

profession and allows them to earn up to 12 college credits.

“It’s the whole package,” Rumore said. “This is something many of us have wanted to do for years. It will encourage kids — and their parents — to think about a career in education.” It also will help bring diversity into the teaching ranks, he said.

Rumore noted students will get field experience in Buffalo classrooms and be matched with a mentor already working in the school system. “The mentor component is critical so the student has someone to talk to, to encourage them,” he said.

Students who want to continue in the program will receive a full tuition scholarship at SUNY Buffalo State, along with financial assistance for room and board.

After graduating from college, the students will get preference for jobs in the district, as long as they commit to working four to five years in the city schools.

The Urban Teacher Academy is designed to encourage students of color to think about teaching and long-term careers in urban school districts. Diversity in the teaching ranks has become a concern all over the country.

In Buffalo, white teachers make up 86 percent of the workforce, while 81 percent of the students in the district are non-white, a city school spokeswoman said.

Faculty members from Buffalo State and staff from the Buffalo public schools will collaborate to develop the curricula for four college-level courses as part of the new program. Academy students will also take part in activities at Buffalo State to help them prepare for college.

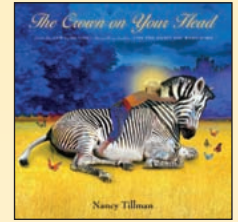
Theresa Harris-Tigg, a professor of English education at Buffalo State, United University Professions member and member of the Buffalo school board, said the new program will enhance teacher preparation and help provide a more diverse candidate pool of teaching professionals for the entire Western New York region.

“Teaching is lifelong learning,” she said. “We’re starting with ninth-graders and we are going to grow them out ... I’m excited to be talking to students about their own teaching and learning experiences.”

Rumore said grant funding will initially help pay for the program, but his ultimate goal is to set up a foundation that accepts donations.

The Crown on Your Head

by Nancy Tillman



Recommended by: MaryAlice Brennan, library media specialist, Oswego Middle School, Oswego Classroom Teachers Association

Recommended for: Pre-K through grade 4

Why I chose this book: This lyrical picture book conveys the message that all children (and, for that matter, all people) have intrinsic value, as well as an opportunity to make their own unique contributions to the world. Fanciful watercolors illustrate a shimmering crown that adorns each child’s head, representing their potential to shine and soar. “Whatever it is you choose to do, no one can do it exactly like you” reassures readers that they have promise.

What I like best: Children need to feel that they are loved, and this story reinforces that message. In this illustrated story, each child is born with a beautiful crown that grows and stays with them, no matter where life leads. Tillman’s magical illustrations are digitally layered, and, combined with poetry, convey the message that every individual has worth and magnificence.

How teachers can use this book: This story would be a perfect companion piece to Dr. Seuss’ *Oh, The Places You’ll Go*. Teachers could use this as a way for students to share information about their hobbies, interests and passions, and also as a way to affirm and encourage their students’ individuality.

About the author: For many of her books, Nancy Tillman creates digital illustrations, using layers of illustrative elements that are then merged to form a composite. Texture and mixed media are applied next. Five of her books have been *New York Times* bestsellers. She previously worked in advertising and creating greeting cards. For more information, visit www.nancytillman.com.

“Check it Out” features books recommended to teachers and parents by school librarians and other educators. Have a recommendation? Send suggestions, along with your name and local union, to lfrenett@nysutmail.org.

Watch for more



Buffalo’s new Urban Teacher Academy is among many programs designed to improve teacher recruitment and retention. In future issues, *NYSUT United* will profile other innovative programs, including a new two-year residency program at SUNY Plattsburgh in which college students work with teachers in Hudson Falls, Cambridge and the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES. Tell us about programs in your area. Write to us at united@nysutmail.org.



PROVIDED

5 QUESTIONS FOR ... **Ina Casali**

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

to make a difference. As the Marines say, "The journey never ends."

2. With increasing numbers of veterans enrolled in community colleges, what are some of the unique challenges they encounter?

Most feel out of place. They miss the camaraderie they had while in the military. As adviser to the Student Veterans Association, I hear veterans talk about having difficulty with civilian students' lack of respect and discipline and being uncomfortable when certain questions are asked of them. Their military experience has matured them far beyond their actual age. There is also PTSD and the lack of understanding by faculty, staff and students. Most veterans make excellent students because they are used to structure and nothing less than their best is acceptable.

3. What are the Student Veterans Association chapters on the SCCC campuses about?

SVA is an association where veterans can come together and find that camaraderie they knew in the military. No matter how old we are, where or when we served, male or female, it's an undeniable bond, like no other. We do projects that benefit other veterans, whether at the college or in the community. And sometimes, when we meet on campus or off, it's just a time and place

to be together and to be who we are: veterans, people whose lives have been forever changed by their military service and who are learning to fit back into the civilian world.

4. As an adjunct instructor and union activist, can you isolate the biggest obstacles to equity for part-time faculty?

The biggest complaint I hear from my constituents is they feel excluded, that they are "just" adjuncts. Because they are part time and not always on campus, many meetings are not accessible to them. And, adjuncts are not usually selected for full-time positions.

5. As a member of the Faculty Association Executive Council, how has your role helped to promote fairness for adjuncts at Suffolk?

I've been an adjunct for 27 years and have worked outside the college full time, too. I have applied for full-time status, so I understand their frustration. If they understand an EC rep experiences the same situations they do, it creates a better relationship. I encourage them to get involved in the college and in the community.

As faculty, we can represent the college in the Long Island community. Without using your voice, you can't be heard nor can you expect to develop fairness in issues affecting adjuncts.

Ina Casali is an adjunct assistant professor of English and faculty adviser for the Student Veterans Association at Suffolk County Community College's Grant Campus. She helps her union advocate for adjunct rights.

1. You served your country in the Navy. Can you describe your return to civilian life and journey into higher education?

Coming home after serving in the Navy WAVES during the Vietnam Era was very difficult. There was no warm welcome. Vietnam was not something veterans talked about, except to each other. My mother said I had become hard and tough. I was quiet and uncomfortable with the people around me. What I didn't realize at the time, is that I had changed, not the rest of the world.

My college education was delayed due to a horrific car crash (which took many years and numerous surgeries to repair the damage to my face). At 37, I knew I needed an education. I wanted



[LETTERS]

Adjuncts deserve justice

Thank you for the story, "Testing, unfair teacher evals, plight of adjuncts, 'con con' threat." (*NYSUT United*, May 2017 issue) Having taught in Pennsylvania, New York and Florida, I've lived the life of an adjunct and the issue of pay equity is critical. The abuse and overuse of adjuncts has been an invisible and neglected issue for more than 30 years. The sweatshop labor conditions

include no benefits and no office, although I was given a mailbox. It was difficult to forge relationships with any full-time faculty. In fact, I felt invisible. I never knew if I would be teaching the next semester or the next year. After spending nine years to get a Ph.D., it was a reality check to be treated so badly in adjunct positions. Having a husband who made a living wage allowed me to be an adjunct for so long.

No full-time job ever materialized as a

result of being at these institutions where they could see me teaching. At one college where a full-time position became available, I applied and I wasn't even interviewed although I was an adjunct in the department! That was more than 15 years ago and as a senior citizen I have decided that my talents deserve a living wage. For all of these reasons, it is critical that NYSUT continue the fight to get justice for adjuncts.

— Mary Jane Capozzoli-Ingui, Ph.D.

Dear teacher ...

Thank you
 From the child you taught to read
 From the battered child
 you held close
 From the one you taught
 to act on stage
 So she could be herself
 From the one who couldn't count
 Until you convinced him he did
 From the one who stuttered
 And you waited
 From the friendless one
 You shared lunch with
 From the heavy one
 You taught to dance
 From the immigrant
 You welcomed
 From the one they teased
 And you told I'm with you
 From the one who acted tough
 But you weren't fooled
 From the one whose writing
 was an angry shout
 That you read and corrected
 From the one
 whose life was closed
 And you opened a door
 From the one who said no
 And you said yes
 From all the kids you taught
 were OK
 And can be better
 Thank You.

— Jerry McGovern
 SUNY Plattsburgh

About letters



Letters are published at the discretion of the editor, who takes space, relevancy, fairness, legal liability and accuracy into account. To submit a letter, email united@nysutmail.org, fax to 518-213-6415 or mail to Letter to the Editor, NYSUT Communications, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110. Please include your name and hometown or union.



MARTHA JANE'S PHOTOGRAPHY

April Jordan is a driver/monitor in the Brushton-Moira Central School District and a member of the Brushton-Moira Support Staff Association. She was interviewed by Cheryl Rockhill, BMSSA president.

Getting to know ... April Jordan

Tell me about your job.

I have been employed by Brushton-Moira Central schools for five years. For the past three, I have been a bus driver/ monitor, and before that I was a bus monitor and cafeteria monitor.

My job is sometimes a little overwhelming, yet always very rewarding. I adore and love the children I work with.

I have respect for and care about my fellow employees. We bus drivers really have each other's backs. A lot of times when you're out there on the road, you might need questions answered right away.

We come together, and if one of us doesn't have the answer, the other one usually does. It is a real good relationship. We're closer to being a family than co-workers.

What do you do in your union?

I was union secretary and that job was very overwhelming and time consuming but, again, rewarding. I learned a lot about our union, our district, our jobs and what's to come. Cheryl [Rockhill] had invited me to a BMSSA meeting. I enjoyed it. I had lots of questions, she had lots of answers. When I was nominated for secretary in the next school year, I felt very comfortable taking the position. Being part of the union is very important, and we definitely make a difference in lots of ways.

How do you make a difference?

My time with the children is very different than that of a teacher. You learn a lot about a child when they're sitting down enjoying a meal or riding the bus because that's when we have time

to talk. I get to see where the children live, how they live. I am the first face they see in the morning, outside of their home, and the last.

How about other activities?

I spend as much time with my children as possible. I love to dance. I am a new Zumba instructor. I host a class in my school where children are free to come to dance, with parent permission, of course. Being healthy is important. When they lose three pounds it's a big deal. I feel great! I know they feel great!

I am enjoying my opportunity to work for BMCSD, to be part of the children's lives, to work with the people and to know when I need them, they are there. I thank God for the opportunity to be where I am, and to be healthy and happy!

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SOURCE: PROVIDED

North Babylon Teachers Organization

In a little more than three hours, the North Babylon Teachers Organization, led by President Kathryn Dein, distributed 44,000 free books to the community and to district classrooms. Dein praised the work of NBTO Vice President Jeanne Saeli, who worked with NYSUT and AFT to bring the First Book program to the district. "Thank you to all the faculty, staff, custodians, students, administrators and community members for making this possible," Dein said. NBTO is a 1997 graduate of the NYSUT Local Action Project program.

Valley Central Teachers Association

The Valley Central TA donated eight banners showcasing their school spirit and support of students. Banners will hang for at least one year at the high school, middle school, alternative learning center, athletic facility and the district's four elementary schools. "The VCTA is an active participant in the community and is eager to partner with groups such as the Valley Central Athletic Booster Club to help children reach their greatest potential," said local President Rich Steger.



SOURCE: VALLEY CENTRAL TA/FACEBOOK

Maine-Endwell Teachers Association

The Maine-Endwell TA, led by President Patricia Sergent, took to Facebook to help get out the vote for the school budget, and to introduce the local's endorsed candidates for school board. The local featured profiles of the candidates that detailed their qualifications and commitment to the community. Both candidates were successfully elected May 16. Bravo META!!

Half Hollow Hills Teachers Association

Half Hollow Hills TA elementary teacher volunteers, and a young helper, assemble welcome packages for incoming kindergartners. The local is led by Richard Haase. The welcome package idea is one of several to come out of the local's participation in the NYSUT Local Action Project, the statewide union's community outreach and coalition building initiative.



SOURCE: HALF HOLLOW HILLS TA/FACEBOOK

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MISCELLANEOUS

MEMBER IN DIRE need of kidney donation. 347-612-3432.

ELA TEACHERS GRADES 6-12 — Fellow NYSUT member seeking participants to complete a short survey for my dissertation. "New York State Teachers Stages of Concern and the Extent of Implementation of English Language Arts Common Core State Standards in the Wake of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)." The anonymous survey can be found at https://survey.monkey.com/r/NYS_ELA.

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[PASSINGS]

Frances Ahern | Feb. 8, 2017
United Teachers of Northport

Manuel (Manny) Darwin | May 6, 2017
Retiree Council 20

Konstantina (Tina) J. Doufekias |
June 24, 2016
Yonkers Federation of Teachers

Seymour (Sy) Ginsburg | Nov. 30, 2016
Central Islip Teachers Association

William (Bill) Hall | Jan. 7, 2017
United Teachers of Northport

Anthony S. Izzo | Jan. 3, 2017
Connetquot Teachers Association

Joyce S. McKnight | March 12, 2017
United University Professions -
Empire State

Wygenia Miles | March 31, 2017
Buffalo Teachers Federation

Charles Mundon | Jan. 22, 2017
Capital Region BOCES Faculty
Association

Norman Nadeau | May 13, 2016
Central Islip Teachers Association

Tona Suzanne Rea | May 26, 2016
Valley Stream Teachers Association

Doris J. Sage | May 4, 2017
Retiree Council 7

Phillip A. Willcox | May 11, 2017
East Syracuse Minoa United Teachers

Full obituaries, if provided, are available at www.nysut.org. Submissions must include decedent's full name, union affiliation and date of death, and contact information for the person submitting the notice.

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'In the face of adversity, persevere'

Schenectady retiree recalls history-making time at Texas Tech



MARTY KERINS JR

By Kara Smith
ksmith@nysutmail.org

Stella Crockett-Courtney, vice president of the Schenectady Association of Retired Teachers, was a newly minted high school graduate living in Lubbock, Texas, with her family in the summer of 1961. She looked forward to starting the next chapter of her life. A stroke of a pen altered her life plans profoundly.

"Texas Tech University integrated that summer," Crockett-Courtney said of the four-year research university located in her hometown.

Her parents and her band director encouraged her to attend as one of the first African-American students.

"I had to pay \$300 a semester to attend Texas Tech, versus a full scholarship to Langston, but my parents didn't even think about the money — that's how important it was to them that I get that degree," said Crockett-Courtney.

The next four years brought a host

of new experiences, some good, some bad. "I had to do a bus transfer each day and I remember going to Woolworths, which had just integrated, and getting a hamburger to eat on the way," she said. "When I opened the bag I saw they hadn't wrapped it, [they] just threw the burger in."

A psychology professor used the "N-word" on the first day of class after seeing her in the front row. "I went right to the administration building and dropped the course," she said. "I figured he might not be fair."

She was in the Texas Tech student union in 1963 when President Kennedy's assassination was announced. "We black students were sitting together and a group of white students jumped up and screamed and cheered, 'The N-lover is dead!'" she said. Fighting back wasn't an option, but the experience hurt.

Others were respectful. "They might not have wanted to be my friend, but they would speak," she said. "My home economics teacher and a biology

□ Stella Crockett-Courtney, Schenectady Federation of Teachers retiree, is the first African-American to graduate from Texas Tech.

teacher were very nice."

Despite stories of the verbal and physical abuse suffered by integration pioneers like the Little Rock Nine who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Ark., Crockett-Courtney wasn't afraid to attend Texas Tech. "I was so gung-ho about getting an education, I don't think I was scared," she said, crediting her strength to her faith. "I did what I had to do and trusted in the man above."

In 1965, Crockett-Courtney became the first African-American to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas Tech.

Nearly 60 years later, and after 43 years in the classroom, most working with special needs students, her message is perseverance.

"No matter what happens, you keep pushing," she said. "Don't let anyone or anything stop you from reaching your goals."

It's an honor

Douglas Hallberg, Mohonasen Teachers Association, was recognized by SHAPE America (the Society of Health and Physical Educators) as the 2017 National Middle School PE Teacher of the Year. **Lynn Hefele**, Associated Teachers of Huntington, was recognized by the organization as the Eastern region elementary teacher of the year.

Susan Fountain, Professional Staff Congress-CUNY School of Professional Studies chapter, won the American Association of University Professors 2017 Georgina M. Smith Award. The award recognizes a person who has provided exceptional leadership "in improving the status of academic women or in academic collective bargaining and through that work has improved the profession in general."

In print

Belkis Marte, United Federation of Teachers, has written *My Childhood Memories*, a memoir laden with anecdotes and humor about her life as a young girl growing up in rural Dominican Republic with 15 siblings. The story is one of finding humor and blessings in life despite poverty, and how Marte eventually moved to the United States. The book is available at Barnes and Noble and Amazon.

Andrew Puckey, Whitesboro TA, has published *Elevator Babies*, a collection of interconnected short stories following a narrator's time as he grows from a child into his teens. The book gives readers a true sense of what it was like when life meant going out to play and not coming home until dinnertime. It is available at andrewpuckey.com.

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**2016 Insurance Barometer Study, limra.org

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From left, Anne Marie Voutsinas, RC 7 retiree consultant; Carol Graham, RC 7 treasurer; and NYSUT Board member Loretta Donlon, RC 7 president, march for union solidarity in Syracuse.



ANDREW WATSON

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta; Florence McCue, at-large ED 51-53 director; and Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, Yonkers FT, at a constitutional convention workshop in Colonie.



EL-WISE NOISETTE

From left, NYSUT Board member Tony McCann, RC 10; Melanie Pores, RC 10; Bill Richie, RC 10; Alice Brody; and Karen Wojcik-Hess, RC 12, attend a Workers Memorial Day service in April at NYSUT Headquarters.

Regional conferences

- **RC 10, May 10, NYSUT HQ.**
Retiree Services Consultant: Barb McCarthy
- **RC 1-3 & 44, May 23, Millenium Hotel, Cheektowaga.** *Retiree Services Consultant:* Tracy Beatty
- **RC 11 & 45, May 24, TBA.**
Retiree Services Consultant: Mark Padgett
- **RC 4 & 46, May 24, Radisson, Corning.** *Retiree Services Consultant:* Louise Ortman

Did you know?



NYSUT Retiree Services consultants are resources to retired members, retiree councils and in-service locals on NYSUT retiree matters.

Tracy Beatty, RC 1-3, 44
716-634-7132

Louise Ortman, RC 4 & 46
716-664-7425

Peter Randazzo, RC 5 & 6
585-454-5550

Anne Marie Voutsinas, RC 7 & 8
315-431-4040

Barbara McCarthy, RC 9 & 10
518-783-7977

Mark Padgett, RC 11 & 45
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403(b) plans: What's the right one for you?

Americans who work for private employers can take advantage of 401(k) retirement savings plans. The options, however, are vastly different for public school educators and those who work for not-for-profits. They are offered supplemental 403(b) retirement savings plans.

It's important to understand how these plans work before you decide whether a 403(b) plan is right for you.

What is a 403(b) anyway?

The 403(b) option functions in most of the same ways as 401(k) plans. The Internal Revenue Code allows for pre-tax contributions via salary deferrals to 403(b) plans. Earnings on these contributions are not taxed until withdrawn. And, it means you do not pay income taxes on any gains and earnings until money is withdrawn from the account. Your employer's plan document governs

the 403(b) plans available to you.

How much can I invest?

The IRS limits the amount of money you can contribute to your 403(b) account each year. The limit for 2017 is the lesser of \$18,000 or 100 percent of salary. This limit is indexed for inflation each year in \$500 increments and may or may not increase in each subsequent calendar year. An age-50 catch-up contribution limit allows you to contribute up to an additional \$6,000 in 2017 if you attain age 50 before the end of the calendar year.

Does my school district contribute?

Maybe. Employers might match your contribution, give a flat amount contribution, contribute a percentage of your salary, or make a contribution upon retirement.

How about fees?

While recent legislation has been passed to help clean up the retirement plan arena regarding disclosure of fees, compensation and even accepting a fiduciary role, 403(b) plans remain mostly exempt from these regulations. Before you commit your money to a 403(b) plan, understand what the fees are in your investment choices. In many cases they are added together with other fees.

To help you wade through the myriad options in 403(b) plans, NYSUT Member Benefits has published the *403(b) Field Guide* that delves into more detail about the types of 403(b) providers, how to contribute and make withdrawals, and defines the various fees associated with different fund types. NYSUT Member Benefits also offers presentations to your local or retiree council:

■ "403(b) Basics," designed for new NYSUT members, offers a general

explanation of the plans and stresses the need for members to start saving for retirement early in their career.

■ "Inside the 403(b)" is designed to help members better understand their options when choosing a 403(b) plan by taking a detailed look at the various types of 403(b) programs available.

■ "The Challenging Times of Financial Management" discusses the various investment options available during retirement along with helpful information regarding your 403(b), Social Security benefits, income taxes and more.

Contact your local president or chapter leader if you are interested in bringing one of these presentations to your group. The NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed Financial Counseling Program is also available for an annual fee.

For more info, go to <http://memberbenefits.nysut.org/program-service/legal-and-financial/403b-plans>.

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Get the most out of your summer vacation

One of the characteristics that defines us as humans is our love affair with the concept of anticipation — the act of preparing for something or a feeling of excitement about something that’s going to happen.

This one word is incredibly important to both our mental health and our ability to continually look forward to excitement in our lives that’s just over the horizon.

And with summer about to begin, you’re likely anticipating all of the wonderful things you’re going to finally be able to do.

Maybe you’ll take that beach vacation ... or finally have the time to work on that project you’ve been putting off for too long ... or maybe just sleep late on a Tuesday, wake up at your leisure and savor that second cup of morning coffee brewing in your kitchen.

No matter what you’re anticipating

this summer, hopefully you’re able to actually do it. Sadly, we sometimes have great anticipation but fail to follow through.

That is why it’s important to take the time to take care of some of those things you’ve been putting off before it’s too late — such as important insurance, financial or legal matters.

Look to your union — and NYSUT Member Benefits — for assistance in finding the right plan for you and to help you save some money to finance your fun plans.

Whether you’re looking for a new auto or homeowners’ insurance policy (or simply want to comparison shop), NYSUT Member Benefits offers quality endorsed auto, homeowners and life insurance programs that can help you protect your family. If you need expert legal or financial assistance from a trusted source, we offer that as well.

Member Benefits endorses a number of fun shopping and travel programs that can help you save on everything from movie tickets to gym memberships.

The Member Benefits-endorsed Abenity discounts program gives you access to approximately 290,000 exclusive member discounts across 10,000 U.S. cities, including discounted tickets for entertainment and sporting events; a variety of travel opportunities; and numerous local deals (along with an exclusive app that can be used anywhere in the U.S.).

Are you looking to plan a bucket list trip like an unforgettable adventure through the Badlands of South Dakota, including Mount Rushmore?

You can experience this and dozens of other amazing adventures with the Member Benefits-endorsed Premier World Discovery program.

Choose from a lineup of more than

70 travel programs around the globe, including fully escorted tours, European river cruises and special getaways.

Visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 to learn more about these programs along with many other savings opportunities.

Remember: Your union membership allows you the opportunity to participate in the more than 40 endorsed programs and services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits.

For information about this program or about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



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To see how these discounts could really add up, call us toll-free at 1-866-NYSUT-22 (1-866-697-8822). You also have the option to speak with a local agent for a free insurance review and no obligation quote. To find a local agent in your area, visit our website at www.MetLife.com/NYSUT.



MetLife Auto & Home is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5.5% of total premiums for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. MetLife Auto & Home is a brand of Metropolitan Property and Casualty Insurance Company and its affiliates: Economy Preferred Insurance Company, Metropolitan Casualty Insurance Company, Metropolitan Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Company, Metropolitan General Insurance Company, Metropolitan Group Property and Casualty Insurance Company and Metropolitan Lloyds Insurance Company of Texas, all with administrative home offices in Warwick, RI. Coverage, rates, discounts and policy features vary by state and product, and are available in most states to those who qualify. Met P&C®, MetCasSM and MetGenSM are licensed in state of Minnesota. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs. L0117488350[exp0119][All States][DC]

Time to review your plan

Once a year we provide New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) members with a personalized Member Annual Statement to help guide their financial planning. Your statement details your ERS membership information as of March 31. Statements are mailed starting in mid-May and continue for several weeks.

The first three pages list basic facts, such as your tier, registration number, ERS ID, date of birth, date of membership, first day of credited service, any past service payments and any contribution and/or loan balances. This last item is important: Any outstanding loan balances at retirement will permanently reduce your benefit. Your statement also shows you a breakdown of any such reductions based on your age when you retire.

Page four provides service credit and salary information. For members of Tiers 2-6, your statement shows how much service credit you have earned. If you think you are missing service, contact us and we will look into it.

If you think your salary totals aren't accurate, check with your employer. Remember: These amounts are based on a fiscal year (April 1 - March 31); they probably won't match the information on your W-2 form, which is based on a calendar year.

Your statement also lists your retirement plan. If you have not already done so, please visit our Publications page at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/index.php, where you



Every issue, state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, sole trustee of the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System, provides information on the system, which delivers retirement benefits to many NYSUT School-Related Professionals and other support staff. If you are an ERS member with a question of general interest, email united@nysutmail.org.

For immediate assistance, call the ERS Contact Center toll-free at 866-805-0990 or 518-474-7736 in the Capital District area.

can find your retirement plan publication and bookmark it for future reference.

Page five features important information about your death benefits and beneficiaries. To protect your privacy, our representatives cannot release details about your beneficiary or your death benefit over the phone or by email, so it's a good idea to hold on to your statement.

On page six, most members can find estimates of their pension benefit. These are based on your current salary and projections of what your service credit would be if you continue working at the same rate (full time or part time). You can also see the payment options available to you at different retirement ages.

Page seven highlights milestones specific to your retirement plan, such as death and disability benefit eligibility, vesting requirements and how your service credit can affect your benefit.

Your statement ends with general information about ERS and ways to stay connected through social media. If you have questions about your statement, visit our tutorial at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/mas_index.php.

NYSUT ERS consultants

Most NYSUT School-Related Professionals* belong to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS). NYSUT ERS consultants are available to help SRP members navigate the retirement system. Consultants can answer questions, provide forms and help members contact the ERS. Contact any one of our consultants for assistance.

Trudi Davis • 914-592-4411

troers@nysutmail.org

Kathy Hine • 585-454-5550, ext. 144
rochers@nysutmail.org

Patti Lennon • 516-496-2035, ext. 324
nroers@nysutmail.org

*Note: Certified teaching assistants belong to the state Teachers' Retirement System (TRS).

When retirement nears

Q: I can hardly believe it, but the end of the 2016-17 school year marks the start of my retirement. Any last minute reminders?

A: Congratulations on reaching the end of your teaching career. Here are some final words of retirement wisdom:

- If you need to change the payment choice you selected on your retirement application, you have 30 days after your retirement date to make a switch. Use the Election of Retirement Benefit (RET-54.6) form to make changes.

- If you plan to return to New York State public employment after retirement, check the New York State Teachers' Retirement System website, www.nystrs.org, for the latest information on retirement earnings and possible earnings limits.

- If you're under 65, you must have a one-business-day break before returning to work with a NYS public employer.

- You can withdraw your retirement application, or change your retirement date, by notifying TRS up to 14 days after the effective date of your retirement.

- If NYSTRS receives your retirement

Did you know



The New York State Teachers' Retirement System has thousands in unclaimed funds and abandoned accounts. To see if you're owed a refund, visit <https://secure.nystrs.org/unclaimedfunds/unclaimedfunds.aspx>

application at least 30 days before your retirement date, you'll generally receive your first direct deposit payment on the last business day of your retirement month. If your application is received closer to your retirement date, you'll likely receive your first two payments simultaneously on the last business day of the next month.

Q: How do I make an appointment for a PREP seminar, or for a personalized benefits consultation?

A: Contacting NYSTRS is the first step. Both consultations are free, but each must be scheduled in advance. PREP seminars explain critical benefit-related decisions and review financial and legal considerations. You can stay for an entire seminar, or select modules that address your concerns. A PREP video, poster and brochure are available at www.nystrs.org. To reserve a PREP seminar seat, contact NYSTRS at 800-782-0289, ext. 6180, or use your MyNYSTRS account.

Personalized retirement benefit consultations, including a printed estimate of your retirement benefit, are available either in person or via videoconference at NYSTRS offices statewide. Call 800-782-0289, ext. 6110, or use your MyNYSTRS account.

If you're planning to retire soon, don't wait until the last minute to register for these offerings. PREP seminars and individual benefit consultations fill up quickly as the end of the school year approaches.

NYSUT TRS consultants

TRS members with questions may call your teacher-members on the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board of Directors:

David Keefe • 516-741-1241
(Retiree Representative)

Tim Southerton • 631-273-8822
tsouther@nysutmail.org

Paul Farfaglia • 315-431-4040
pfarfagl@nysutmail.org

Jolene T. DiBrango
trs-q&a@nysutmail.org



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