

Official Publication of The Yonkers Federation of Teachers

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YFT UPDATE

The start of each school year should be viewed as a new beginning, a new opportunity, a new chance to provide our students with the very best educational environment possible. However, with over two hundred of our colleagues still on a recall list, it is hard to look at this September as a time for a fresh start. The number of teachers and teaching assistants taken from our classrooms is so large that funding for their return can only come from the state and federal governments.

AFT and NYSUT continue to assist us in our outreach to both those levels of government. On Monday, September 26th, Yonkers will be targeted as the start of a statewide campaign highlighting the effects the massive cuts to education have caused. Then, a press conference on September 26 will be followed by an evening round table discussion open to the public on a date to be announced.

While we will continue the fight to return our members, please do not be misguided by claims that teachers were not open to helping the district. The teachers agreed to a \$2.5 million savings cut to the district this school year by deferring payments owed as a result of the salary step arbitration. Another agreement concerning scheduling saved the district over \$3 million. Through our political action persistence, we were able to convince the City Council to include an additional \$5 million in reoccurring funds in the budget. Through the Federation's efforts we have secured close to \$11 million for the district.

A lie told often enough begins to seem like the truth. Unfortunately, the media continues to falsely report that the teachers did nothing whereas they should be asking when the schools will be adequately funded. When will the teachers no longer be the whipping post for Yonkers City Hall's refusal to do its job and secure proper funding for our schools?

At the same time, the district continues to attack our posting, transfer and seniority rights. This year, on the very first day of school, the district pit elementary teacher against elementary teacher by engaging a select few in position "swaps", at the discretion of the principal, completely circumventing seniority and the contractual transfer procedures. As with the other 30+ grievances, arbitrations, and PERB (Public Employment Relations Board) cases, it takes time to resolve, but it will not be ignored.

Recently, a new law was passed concerning teacher and principal evaluations. In the law it clearly states that, until there is a new contract, no new evaluation system can replace the current system. The YFT negotiating team has identified several members to begin discussions with the district regarding our evaluations, including a new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). State tests cannot be used in our present evaluations until a new contract has been negotiated which includes a new evaluation process.

Remember, no administrator can use state tests in your evaluations. If any administrator tries to do so, please report this to your building representative at once. If any observation speaks to test scores, it is a serious violation and the YFT office must be informed. Although the Federation has requested dates for negotiations, sadly, the district has not agreed to meet at this time. You can certainly understand how that impedes progress on multiple levels.

In Solidarity,

New Teacher Evaluations

Teachers have questions and we have answers.

Am I going to be evaluated based on my students' performance on state tests?

Yes. However, only 20% of your evaluation must be based on standardized tests.

I had heard that it was going to be 40% based on standardized tests. When did that change?

NYSUT brought a legal action in State Supreme Court to have the newly promulgated regulations changed to correctly reflect the new state law regarding teacher evaluations. Last month the judge ruled that NYSUT was correct and that only 20 % of our evaluations had to be based on student standardized test scores.

Is the new evaluation system going to begin this school year?

No. Not unless it is negotiated with and agreed to by the YFT. We have a contract in place. Although the ending date of our contract has passed, the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor (NYS Collective Bargaining Law) allows our contract to continue in full force unless and until a new contract is negotiated and ratified by the YFT membership and the District.

How will I be evaluated this year?

You will be evaluated according to the terms of the present APPR which was originally negotiated in the year 2000.

What does APPR mean?

The letters stand for Annual Professional Performance Review and it is negotiated by each school district and their teachers' union. It must contain specific things. For example, there are mandated criteria for evaluation and there is a mandatory support plan procedure. The exact way these are used to evaluate teachers is a mandatory subject of bargaining in the state of New York.

What if I am told that there will be a new kind of evaluation of teachers in my school?

Call the union office. Tell your Building Rep. Only through collective bargaining can a new evaluation system be put in place.

Are you sure it is only 20% based on student test scores?

It is 20% based on standardized test scores, and then 20% based on student performance indicators or local measures that are negotiated. It is 60% based on other criteria similar to what we have now that will be negotiated.

If you would like to send any evaluation suggestions to the negotiations team, please send them to the union office, to the attention of the YFT Education Issues Committee.

You will be kept informed as to the progress of negotiations once they begin.

For the full packet of guidance from the State Education Department which was updated 9/15/11 go to:

<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/fieldguidance/>

Note especially page 48 that explains when the new APPR must be in effect.

** For those who are interested in learning more about the new evaluation criteria, the YFT is hosting Building Rep workshops on the APPR . Any teacher who would like to join us for the workshop(s), please send your contact information to us at **YFT860@bestweb.net** and put APPR Workshop in the subject line or call us at (914) 793-0200.

-Florence McCue

Please Remember to VOTE on Election Day

Tuesday, November 8th 6:00 am to 9:00 pm

At the September 15 Building Assembly votes were cast to determine YFT candidate endorsements. Yonkers candidates were discussed and voted on; also passed was the decision to follow the endorsements of other candidates who were endorsed by the Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Body AFL-CIO with whom we are closely involved in the endorsement process. Since many of our teaching conditions are determined by elected officials, it is very important for us to help elect teacher and student friendly candidates, especially in these times that are so difficult for teachers, union members, and retirees.

As of this writing, the following candidates have been endorsed. There may be more in the coming weeks:

Mayor of Yonkers Michael Spano (D/WF/I)
Yonkers City Council District 1 Christopher Johnson (D)
Yonkers City Council District 3 Michael Sabatino (D/WF/I)

Westchester County Board of Legislators:

District 1	John Testa (R/C)	District 12	MaryJane Shimsky (D/WF)
District 2	Peter Harckham (D/WF/I)	District 13	Lyndon Williams (D/WF)
District 3	John Nonna (D/WF/I)	District 14	George Kevgas (D/WF/I)
District 4	Michael Kaplowitz (D/WF/I)	District 16	Ken Jenkins (D/WF/I)
District 7	Judy Myers (D/WF/I)	District 17	Jose Alvarado (WF/I)
District 8	Alfreda Williams (D/WF)		
District 10	John Fitzpatrick (D/WF)		

Supreme Court Judge 9th JD (2) Edward Borrelli (R)
Robert DiBella (D)

Ossining Village Trustee (2) Robert Daraio (D/WF/I)
Manuel Quesada (D/WF/I)

Mahopac Town Council Peter Creegan (D)

Yorktown Town Council David Paganelli (R/C/I)

Please Remember to vote on Election Day and please give us an hour or more of your time when we call for help with mailers, phone banks, labor walks and rallies. The union is all of us and together we make up a strong voting bloc.

For anyone who knows someone who needs to register to vote for the first time, or those members who would like to update their name, address, or party affiliation on their voter registration, or those whose children have become 18 years of age and have not yet registered, voter registration forms are available from the YFT office. Please email us at YFT860@bestweb.net if you need voter registration form(s) or call us at (914) 793-0200.

Please note that Mailing and Phone Bank schedules for the YFT office cover: **October 25, 26, 27 and Nov. 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8 right after school each day as well as Election Day, November 8th.** Retirees may also come in to help during the school day. Please sign up with your Building Rep. or with the YFT office. We need YOU!!!

Florence McCue, PAC

Friends of the Cambodian Child's Dream Organization

www.friendsofccd.org

By Kara Popiel and Kirk Bauer

Last year, Kirk Bauer and his students at Riverside High School worked with Friends of the Cambodian Child's Dream Organization (Friends of CCDO), a non-profit, non-political organization dedicated



to improving health, life expectancy and living conditions, by supplying such necessities as clean water wells and toilets, and improving education in the community by supplying uniforms, shoes, book bags and school supplies to allow poor children to attend schools. As a result of a presentation made by Jenni Lipa, President of Friends of CCDO, where students learned about the history and culture of Cambodia and gained awareness of genocide and the need for tolerance worldwide, students developed an interest in helping the Cambodian villagers and orphans. Some students even fulfilled their community service requirement by selling leather craft Cut-Outs made by the children at the Little Angels Orphanage. In addition to benefiting the children who make the Cut-Outs, money raised from the sales was used to build two water wells for Cambodian villagers.



This summer, we were fortunate enough to travel to Cambodia to see the two water wells donated by the Riverside H.S. students, as well as another water well we donated last August after returning from our first trip to Cambodia. Although we had seen photos of the wells and a few of the people who benefit by them, seeing them in person, in context, and meeting some of the actual people was extremely moving. To think that our small donations had such an impact on people's lives was inspiring. We saw firsthand and heard from the families how the water wells had improved their lives for themselves, their children and other members of their village by providing clean, safe water.



After visiting the water wells, we also visited the Little Angels Orphanage and delivered educational supplies to children in two schools (Phum Steung & TaPang). At the orphanage we met friendly, hard-working children who demonstrated their many



talents and skills for us: designing and crafting leather carvings and performing a hilarious shadow puppet show. At the schools, students recited their

English lessons for us and sang in English such songs as "Rain, Rain, Go Away," "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes," and "You Are My Sunshine." The children, who ranged in age from 7 to 15, were enthusiastic, friendly and showed a great interest in learning English. Kara, an ESL teacher, had the

opportunity to lead them through a mini-lesson using the popular American children's book by Bill Martin and Eric Carle, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" and also introduced them to two new songs, "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and "I'm a Little Teapot." In all, it was truly a memorable, amazing day.



Each decade since the 1940's there has been a major genocide somewhere in the world. It is the hope

of Friends of CCDO that the lessons learned from the genocide in Cambodia can help foster tolerance among our youth. If you are interested in having your students learn more about the Cambodian genocide or starting a club at your school, please contact jenni@friendsofccd.org or visit www.friendsofccd.org for ideas and tips for success.

Remember: Ordinary people can do extraordinary things that make a difference in the world!



by **Paul J. Diamond, Director**

TEACHER CENTER NEWS



Richard Gazzola Teacher Center Newsletter

Welcome back. It is hard to talk about new opportunities and new goals with the economic hardships our District is forced to endure. Our grant was funded this year at fifty percent, and this will require the Policy Board to make some hard decision. As always, the newsletter will keep you informed.

For those who don't know, the Teacher Center is no longer housed at YECAC. Our equipment is in storage, and I would like to thank Lou Constantino and Connie DiMaggio for their help in ensuring our resources remain safe and secure. At the time of press, our new location is not decided; but as soon as we are set up, we will let you know. I would also like to thank Sue Insler, Miriam Rodriguez and Julie Winters for donating their time in securing Teacher Center resources. Thank you!

In the meantime, we would like to welcome our newest members of the Policy Board: Kevin Clifford, Teacher 3rd grade teacher, Cross Hill Academy; Amanda Curley Executive Director Department of Instructional Support; Peter Diresta, Math Teacher Riverside High School; Pat Langan, Principal, Patricia A. DiChiaro Elementary School; Steven Mazzola, Principal Saunders High School; and Edwin Quezada, Principal Lincoln High School. If you see any new members, take a moment and thank them for investing their time in our professional development future.

Finally, I would like to thank Cara Caico, Mike Ciriello, Margaret Grosniak, Jim Hayes and Christina Longo for their participation in the Policy Board. Their hard work has helped sustain us and we are grateful for their support.



IN MEMORIAM



Sadly, since January 2011, several of our retired and active educators have died. As our membership reads their names, many will experience a very pleasant memory or two ...or three ...or more. Our deepest condolences to the loving families of our deceased friends.

Marion Cantor	Ret. Admin./teacher	Died January 4th, 2011
Anne De Nicholas	Retired from School 25	Died January 9th, 2011
Sandra Adler	Retired from Saunders	Died June 9th, 2011
Eric Erickson	Retired Teacher	Died June 23rd, 2011
Barbara Levy	Retired from Lincoln	Died June 2nd, 2011
Barbara Pappas	Cross Hill Academy	Died June 4th, 2011
Rosemarie Ferine	Retired from 23,24, 30	Died June 28th, 2011
Denise Turner	Retired Teacher	Died June 15th, 2011
Dorothy Bodde	Retired from School 22	Died July 3rd, 2011
Camille Spencer	Active Teacher at 22	Died July 28th, 2011
Noelle Sullivan	Retired from School 18	Died June 25th, 2011
Natalie Raikin	Retired from School 9	Died August 16th, 2011
Emily Feddeck	Retired Lincoln Teacher	Died August 26th, 2011
Gladys Stein	Retired from Saunders	Died August 28th, 2011
Mary Ann Dwyer	Active Roos. Psychol.	Died this summer
Sharon Tvert	Active Teacher at School 9	Died August 31st, 2011
Nicholas Carille	Retired from Mark Twain	Died Sept. 3rd, 2011
Robert Murphy	Retired from Saunders	Died Sept. 8th, 2011
William Ford	Retired from Yonkers High	Died Sept. 8th, 2011

REST IN PEACE OUR FINE FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

PLEASE CONTACT THE YFT IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WRITE
A MEMORIAL FOR ONE OF OUR DECEASED TEACHERS.
SEND THE MEMORIAL TO YFT860@BESTWEB.NET



Robert J. Murphy

Robert Murphy, a retired Vocational Technology Teacher at Saunders, passed away on September 8, 2011. Robert grew up on the Yonkers waterfront and graduated from Gorton High School.

Robert's mechanical and electrical talent allowed him a fascinating array of careers. He worked on cutting edge nuclear submarine technology and top secret underwater nuclear oxygen systems. Robert also traveled throughout the northeast as a troubleshooter for the New York Central Railroad and at one point was a master electrician at the Union Carbide Research Center in Tarrytown. He also served with the U.S. Navy Reserve Seabees and the U.S. Volunteer Lifesaving Corps.

Robert had a lifelong passion for the water. As a young man, he and his father maintained a private pier and a collection of watercraft. In later years, Robert enjoyed cruising the Long Island Sound on his sailboat, Narwhal.

Robert leaves behind his loving companion, Mary-Ann Karpel, and three children, Robert Jr., Anne, Alison, and Josef.

Noelle Sullivan

Noelle Sullivan passed away suddenly this past summer. She had taught in the Yonkers Public Schools for over 30 years before retiring in the 90s. She worked at School 18, now known as Scholastic Academy, and she served in many positions over the years. She was a classroom teacher, a High and Wide teacher and she ran the Math Lab. She was the unofficial dean of discipline and was able to calmly and quietly intercede in any crisis to achieve consensus resolutions. She was the favorite teacher of many honor students as well as those who required more time and assistance, which she gave with enduring patience. She is survived by her extended family.

Written by Florence McCue

Nicholas Carille

Nicholas Carille passed away on Sept.3, 2011. He is survived by his wife, MaryAnn, who is also a retired Yonkers teacher; 2 sons, Joseph and Nicholas and 3 grandchildren. Nick taught at Mark Twain and was building rep for many years. He enjoyed his family, gardening and traveling. Nick had a great sense of humor. There are many funny stories he used to tell that many friends can recount. Nick will be sorely missed.

Written by Sally Turkin

Gladys Stein

Gladys passed away on Sunday, August 28th, 2011. She taught English at Saunders for twenty five years. In 1994, Gladys was named New York State Teacher of the Year.

Gladys leaves behind her beloved husband, Kaliman, to whom she was married for 58 amazing years. She also leaves behind two daughters, Patti and Melinda, and one son, Adam. She was a loving Nana to Samantha, Lindsey, Gillian, Sarah, Alec, Michael, and Rachel.

Gladys loved the life she built with her husband, and filled it with family and friends, theatre, bridge, books, travel, movies, and the Times Crossword Puzzles.

The family would appreciate contributions to the Saunders High School Gladys M. Stein English Scholarship Fund c/o District Guidance Department, Yonkers Public Schools.

Camille Spencer

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Camille Spencer, alternate Building Rep at School 22. Camille had been active with the union and had spent years as a Building Rep. She attended many union leadership conferences and was part of the YFT delegation to the "One Nation" rally in Washington, DC on October 2, 2010. She will be missed by her family, her teaching colleagues, her students and the by the union. Her warm smile, her strong union spirit and her steadfast courage will always be remembered. She is survived by her husband, two daughters and her new granddaughter. She was 55 years old.

Written by Florence McCue

Sharon Tvert

We announce with sadness the passing of Sharon Tvert who taught in the Yonkers Public Schools for over twenty years, most recently at School # 9. She was 57 years old. She is survived by her three sons, her mother, brother and sister and her former husband, former Yonkers Board of Education Trustee, Stanley Tvert. As an elementary educator she touched so many lives, and she will be remembered by her students and colleagues for her warm and generous spirit.

Written by Florence McCue

