

Official Publication of The Yonkers Federation of Teachers

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CONTRACT UPDATE

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Welcome back to a new school year. I know the beginning can be busy with so many details. We continue to miss so many of our colleagues. The lack of sufficient staff makes all of our jobs that much more difficult. At the same time it is important to bring you up to date regarding YPS/YFT contract negotiations.

After a very slow start to negotiations (even by Yonkers standards), the district did begin to bring conceptual proposals to the table. By that I mean, they essentially asked for everything as a give back. That was in May 2012.

There were very few meetings over the summer. The YFT made itself available for all meetings every time the district was willing to meet. We even changed vacation schedules to make ourselves available. I spoke with Board Trustees about the slow pace. Now in September the district has found the time to meet bi-weekly. This is progress, but there are many serious issues/proposals before us. Serious in the sense that the district's

proposals would actually cut your pay, reduce your grievance rights, and impose a questionable teacher evaluation.

There will come a time to hold a districtwide membership meeting. We will give you plenty of notice - make sure you are present! Never before will your vote be more important. Our new contract will contain our new teacher evaluation.

Our goal will be to present a package including an Annual Professional Performance plan (APPR) that comports with the state law but at the same time makes sure that our efforts on behalf of our students are valued and acknowledged.

You should take this time to review the rubric under discussion, "NYSUT Teacher Practice Rubric."

In Unity,

BACKPACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE



Pat Puleo, YFT President and Paul Diamond, YFT Staff Director bring classroom supplies to Mayor's office in support of "Backpack Drive". Close to one thousand dollars in pencils, notebooks, crayons, and other school supplies were donated by the teachers for our students.



Denise Egiziaco, Executive Assistant to Mayor Spano thanks the YFT for their generosity.



The Educational Issues Committee (Ed Issues) is pleased to present this inaugural “At Issue” column. Our goal is to identify, research, analyze and disseminate information regarding significant issues that affect education locally and nationally in order to inform our readership. It is our hope to create a forum where we can share information that supports our profession and each other.

received a rating of unsatisfactory on their End of the Year Annual Evaluation are required to keep a plan book. Tenured teachers are not “required” to keep a plan book, however if asked, must show evidence of planning. Evidence of planning can include prepared worksheets, pages from a class text that will be reviewed, curriculum guides as well as any form of assessments.

At Issue...The Current State of our APPR

New York State Education Law 3012(c) requires that every district adopt a new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). Governor Cuomo has given districts a January 2013 deadline to collectively bargain a new teacher evaluation system. So what is the current state of our APPR? To be blunt, we don’t have one. Although we have been working to develop a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that will be fair and allow teachers to engage in professional dialogue without fear of reprisal from those who are to evaluate us, we have nothing yet to present. It is important to note that while both Cross Hill Academy (CHA) and Early College High School (ECHS) had a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for an evaluation plan under the new regulations, it sunset in June, 2012 and has not been renegotiated. Therefore, teachers at CHA and ECHS are to be evaluated under the current APPR as is every other teacher in our district. All teachers are to be rated under the current criteria and receive either an S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory).

At Issue...Our Contractual Rights

Here are just a few reminders of some basic contractual rights that seem to be overlooked by some administrators. Don’t assume that your principal knows the contract – even though he or she should. It is our responsibility to ensure that our rights are not violated. And remember, we can’t voluntarily break the contract.

Lunch

All teachers are entitled to a daily, duty-free lunch. It cannot be taken away nor can you be given assignments to complete during this time.

Lunch Duty

Elementary teachers are relieved of lunch duty and secondary teachers cannot be assigned lunch duty two years in a row (regardless of whether they are in a different building).

Preparation Periods

All teachers are entitled to preparation periods. These periods are duty free and are to be used at the discretion of the teacher to prepare for instruction. By Contract, use of preparation periods is determined by the teacher. Administrators may not assign or prohibit teacher selected tasks, meetings and/or conferences.

Teacher Interest Committee (TIC)

Each building has a contractual right to a Teacher Interest Committee that meets monthly with the building principal to discuss matters of mutual concern. Matters of mutual concern should not be misconstrued as mutually agreeable agenda items;

At Issue...Opening School Reminders

Elementary level teachers: remember you are only required to post one opening objective for the day. Teachers may not be directed to post more than the opening objective (e.g. related state standard or Common Core Learning Standard, etc.) Teachers may not be reprimanded or penalized for posting this one, opening objective. Notify your Building Rep if you are told by an administrator to do otherwise or if it’s reflected in your observation. Secondary level teachers must post the objectives for each lesson or class. Only non-tenured teachers and tenured teachers who

rather they should be viewed as issues that may affect or limit the productivity and effectiveness of our teachers. Teacher productivity and effectiveness is a shared concern.

Teachers should first try to find a solution to any issue that confronts them, and if unable to do so, bring it to a member of TIC or the Building Rep so that it can be addressed at the TIC meeting. Conflicts among teachers are inappropriate for TIC discussion.

Monthly meetings should be held regardless of the number of items to be addressed. As these meetings are formal, there needs to be an agenda and minutes need to be taken. Refer to Article 4, Section B on page 3 for TIC guidelines.

TIC is a contractual right given to teachers. It is unacceptable for an administrator to refuse to meet, set meeting times, dictate what items are included on or excluded from the agenda, decide what is discussed or how minutes are handled. It is the goal of the YFT to rectify issues at the building level; however, any item that is consistently on the TIC agenda without resolution is brought to the Superintendent.

Every building needs a TIC committee and should have regular monthly meetings. All TIC minutes need to be forwarded to the area VP at the time of distribution.

Union Prep Periods

All YFT Vice Presidents (VPs) and Secondary Building Representatives are entitled to one period daily to handle Union business.

Elementary teachers in Pre K – 6 schools are relieved from building assignments during student arrival. They are also entitled to an additional 30 minute prep period a week.

Elementary teachers in Pre K – 8 schools are relieved from building assignments during student arrival or dismissal and will receive one additional period daily to handle Union business.

Building Reps are to use this time to handle building level issues and union directives.

VPs are to use this time to deal with various issues throughout the district. This time is set aside for YFT business; not to meet with administration, unless initiated by the Rep.

Refer to Article 4, Sections A and C on pages 2 and

3, and Article 10 Section S on page 56 for additional information.

At Issue...The movie *Won't Back Down*

On September 28, 2012, the movie, *Won't Back Down*, starring Maggie Gyllenhaal and Viola Davis, will be released nationwide. It's a movie that tells the story of two women, one a mother and one a teacher, who use an obscure law to take over an under-achieving school. This movie is based on Parent Trigger laws that originated in California, and were subsequently adopted by Texas, Mississippi and Connecticut. At least nine other states are considering similar legislation – New York being one of them. The New York version of the law, currently being introduced as “The Empire Strikes Back,” will allow parents at a failing school to take control of it and implement reforms such as changing it into a charter school, removing the administration and terminating the staff, should a majority of parents approve to do so. It is incumbent upon each of us to be keenly aware of the public's perception of teachers.

At Issue...Who to contact if there is a problem

Always remember, our position is Comply and Complain. If you believe that one of your rights is being or has been violated, do as you are directed and immediately notify your Building Rep. Do not put yourself in a position to be cited for insubordination. Here is a list of others that you may contact:
Elementary VPs: Samantha Rosado-Ciriello and Joanne Casella
Middle School VP: Debbie DeVito
High School VP: James Hayes
Special Areas VP: Lia Council

Administrators do not have the legal right to tell you not to go to the Union with your concerns.

And remember...the YFT is on interoffice mail distribution.

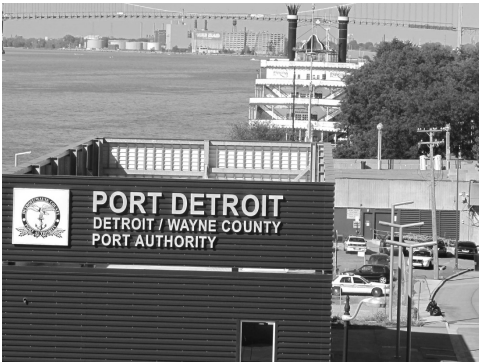
Ask Ed Issues...

Interested in something specific? Have a question that you would like answered?

Feel free to submit inquiries to *Ask Ed Issues* at the attention of the Ed Issues Committee at the YFT Office via mail, email or fax.

AFT Convention 2012

Detroit, Michigan



by Florence McCue

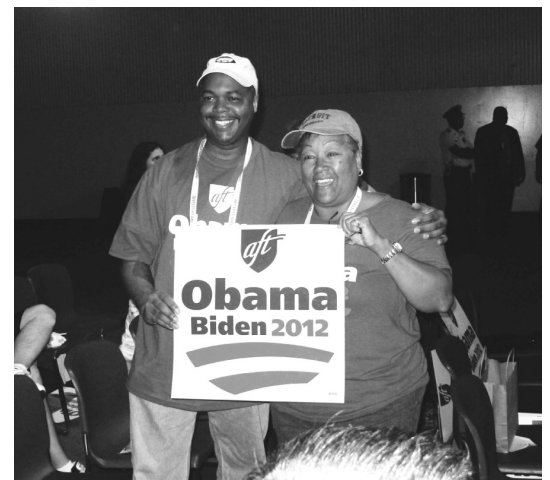
This summer, between July 26 and July 30, your elected representatives attended the American Federation of Teachers Convention in the birthplace of Motown, USA (aka “Motor City”). **President Pat Puleo** was joined by delegates; **Joanne Casella, Emiko Castro, Debbie Collier, Lia Council, Jacqueline Davis, Jayme Downes, Walter Edwards, Jeanne Ismail, Florence McCue, and Claudia Wright-Henry.** After a 10 hour weather related flight delay at LaGuardia Airport, we were on our way to a packed agenda at the convention. Even with Canada just a stone’s throw away, there was little time for sightseeing. Detroit was welcoming and accommodating. Our travel to the convention center and from our hotel was aided by the one-of-a-kind “people mover”.



The theme of the convention was ***Solution Driven Unionism.*** AFT President Randi Weingarten emphasized unity, solidarity and organizing to combat the wave of anti-union sentiment that has taken hold. Attacks on public employees that undermine public services are found in state legislatures around the country. We were called upon to continue coalition building with business and community partners and to stand strong for those we represent. *“More than ever, we need to act in innovative, creative and new ways—simultaneously refuting our critics, advancing our values, connecting with community and proposing solutions. That’s solution driven unionism.”*

We passed a series of resolutions to increase educational and economic opportunity, including;

- <Taking a stand against high stakes testing
- <Redoubling the union’s commitment to put Americans back to work;
- <Developing a nationwide anti-bullying hotline for students, parents and support staff to receive support and counseling; Opposing voter suppression; and
- <Affirming our union’s support for the Affordable Care Act to maintain the quality of our healthcare benefits.





The delegates all resoundingly supported the endorsement of **Barack Obama and Joe Biden**. With collective bargaining rights, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and Social Security hanging in the balance the choice for all union members is clear.

We also learned about sharemylesson.com a new website by teachers for teachers. You are encouraged to visit the site.

On the last day of the convention many of us attended the Women’s Rights breakfast where our own **Ruth Dworkin** received the golden **Living the Legacy** award for 50 years in union advocacy and leadership.



Share My Lesson

by teachers, for teachers

One of starkest differences between educational practices in the United States and in the highest-performing countries is that teachers in the U.S. commonly are assigned a classroom, thrown the keys and told to figure things out: sink or swim. There’s no time regularly built in for teachers to confer or collaborate, to share resources, to problem-solve, or to brainstorm.

Share My Lesson is a new online network that provides educators a way to connect with colleagues across the country. It’s an opportunity for educators to share their expertise and get new ideas. It’s an excellent example of solution-driven unionism— and it’s by teachers, for teachers. For more information on Share My Lesson and to register go to the website www.sharemylesson.com .

Discover facts, figures and tips about the Common Core State Standards. The K-12 standards describe expectations for students in math, English language arts and literacy in all subject areas.

Stephanie-Soler-Claudio

Stephanie was a Special Education Teacher who passed away on August 27th. She left behind two children, Analisa, 17, a senior at YHS, and Julian, 11, a student at Siragusa.

Stephanie joined the YFT family in 2000 when she was hired to work at LHS. Since then, Stephanie worked in a number of schools throughout the district. Her last position, ending in June 2012, was at the Yonkers Montessori Academy.

Throughout her career, Stephanie worked with some of the most challenged and challenging students that our district had to offer. She believed that each and every child could be educated given the time, patience, and guidance of committed professionals.

In her final years, as she battled for her life, Stephanie became an inspiration to those who worked with her. Even as she underwent debilitating treatments, her commitment to her students did not waiver. She exhibited a cheerfulness that belied her condition. Many of her friends were shocked to learn of her death expressly because of the optimism Stephanie always conveyed to those around her.

Stephanie was a dedicated mother to her two children, Analisa and Julian, whom she loved with a fierce pride. She was a dedicated educator. She was a caring colleague. She was a sweet and sensitive friend. She will be missed by us.

Denise Pochat

Denise was a Speech and Language Pathologist at Gorton High School and School 16. She passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in July 2012. She is survived by two daughters, Caroline who is eight and Mauve who is four. She also leaves behind her mother, sister, and husband, Christian.

Denise was a dedicated speech teacher and mother. She lived by the motto "Be kind of one another".

There is a collection for the her daughters. If you would like to contribute to their education fund please send a check made out to Jennifer Ruffino, Speech Teacher at School 16 by December 1, 2012.

Written by Jennifer Ruffino

CLAIM FORMS

REMEMBER TO OBTAIN DENTAL AND OPTICAL FORMS IF YOU PLAN TO VISIT A DENTIST OR EYE DOCTOR. YOU CAN ALSO VISIT THE YFT WEB SITE AND CLICK ON THE LINK TO DOWNLOAD MEDICAL FORMS. **THE WEBSITE IS *yftonline.org*.**

YOU NEED TO REJOIN THE UNION AND THE WELFARE FUND IF:

YOU GO OUT ON A FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FLMA) OR ANY OTHER LEAVE, UPON YOUR RETURN TO TEACHING, YOU MUST REJOIN THE UNION (INCLUDING NYSUT) AND THE WELFARE FUND BY RESUBMITTING THE REQUIRED FORMS FOR MEMBERSHIP: NYSUT MEMBERSHIP FORM, WELFARE ENROLLMENT CARD, YFT MEMBERSHIP DUES DEDUCTION CARD, AND THE VOTE/COPE FORM.

THIS ALSO PERTAINS TO ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS A FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN AND HAS RETURNED TO TEACHING; TEACHERS WHO UNDERGO CHANGES IN MARITAL STATUS THROUGH MARRIAGE, DEATH OR DIVORCE OF A SPOUSE; OR ADDITION OF CHILDREN THROUGH BIRTH, DEATH, ADOPTION; OR CHANGES IN BENEFICIARIES OR RESIDENCE AND/OR PHONE NUMBER.

ANYONE FALLING INTO ANY OF THE ABOVE CATAGORIES MUST NOTIFY THE WELFARE FUND.

STUDENT STATUS

ANY DEPENDENT CHILD WHO IS OVER 19 YEARS OLD REQUIRES SCHOOL STATUS TO THE AGE OF 25.. UNLIKE THE MEDICAL PLAN, COVERAGE WITH THE WELFARE FUND ENDS ON YOUR CHILDS 19TH OR 25TH BIRTHDAY. CONTACT THE FUND FOR THE NECESSARY VERIFICATION FORM.



Richard Gazzola Teacher Center

TEACHER CENTER

NEWS

Lia Council, Policy Board Chair

by Paul J. Diamond, Director

E-mail - tchcntr@westnet.com

Teacher Center Phone- 376 8614 FAX- 376 8617

We Are up and Running

Welcome back. The Policy Board met already, and we are ready to receive course proposals. The forms are available on our website, and the deadline is October 18. The Policy Board also reaffirmed our commitment to the mentoring program, so any teacher who is interested in being a mentor or getting a mentor should contact the Teacher Center.

The bad news is that due to the reduced level of funding the courses and mentoring programs will not be as rich as they have in the past. There will only be **ONE CATALOGUE FOR THE YEAR**. It will have courses which cover November to June. Additionally, our mentoring program will also not be as far reaching as it has in the past.

Changes in the Policy Board

It is with mixed emotion that we say goodbye to Margaret Grosiak, a Policy Board member who has been most generous with her time and insight. The Center has benefited immensely from her expertise in English Language Arts. In working with Margaret, I have found her understanding of teaching, learning, and her ability to keep everyone current with regulations and new directions to be outstanding. I have benefitted from her talent and will miss her. We wish you well in retirement!

The Policy Board is pleased to announce Dr. Christopher Macaluso as our newest member. He is working as Director of Mathematics in Central Office. We all look forward to benefiting from his experience and expertise.

Gifted and Talented Extension

We are again partnering with the Teacher Center of Lower Westchester to offer graduate classes which lead to certification extension. For more information, email the director at: director@bept.org.

National Board Certification

October 25th is scheduled for The National Board Certification Awareness Session with Helene Alalouf.

Call the Center to register. Your Teacher Center Representative should have a flyer in your building.

Defensive Driving Course

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Saturday, October 20, 2012

or

Saturday, November 3, 2012

or

Saturday, November 17, 2012

Westchester Hills School 29 in the Library

8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Member Name _____

Check # _____

Address _____

School _____

Phone _____

Cell _____

Date _____

Name(s) of family members- (must be licensed drivers)

Name _____

Check# _____ Date _____

Name _____

Check# _____ Date _____

No Faxes accepted! Make checks payable to NYSUT Benefit Trust.

Mail or bring this application form to: The Richard Gazzola Teacher Center, 1 Larkin Center 3rd Fl, Yonkers, NY 10701, with a \$30 check payable to NYSUT Benefit Trust.

Save The Date

MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER WALK!!

Date & Time:

Sunday, October 21, 2012

Registration from 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Walk begins 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Location:

(Westchester Walk)

Manhattanville College

Purchase, NY



This year commemorates the 20th anniversary of the Making Strides Walk.

Come join us in celebrating!

DAY-BY-DAY

SEPTEMBER

19 EXEC.BD. YFT 3:45

20 PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

OCTOBER

3 EXEC.BD. YFT 3:45

11 BLDG.ASSEM. RSVLT. 3:45

17 EXEC.BD. YFT 3:45

18 ED 15/16

20 ROOSEVELT LK.ISLE
REUNION

21 MAKING STRIDES
WALK PURCHASE 8:00

Roosevelt High School Class of 1982 Reunion

October 20, 2012

Lake Isle Golf Club in Eastchester, NY

Interested teachers can check out our Facebook page "**Roosevelt High School Class of 1982**"-Check out the page to keep updated on your Roosevelt classmates.

email Christian West at -
cawest64@hotmail.com
or call 914-574-1302.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

914 793-0200 YFT OFFICE

914 793-7365 YFT OFFICE FAX

914 793-0393 YFT WELFARE FUND

914 376-7088 CREDIT UNION