

THE Yonkers Teacher

November 2015

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At Issue

V	O	T	E	-	C	O	P	E
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The YFT has come a long way since its founding in 1945. It was formed for the purpose of representation and fairness along with respect and security for the professionals who are charged with the responsibility to educate each successive generation of children in the Yonkers Public Schools. Prior to 1945, many things we assume as givens were nonexistent. Teachers did not have defined preparation periods, welfare fund benefits, or grievance procedures. Class size and number of classes taught in a row were not set with strict limits. You may have heard this all before, but it bears repeating as we are truly in a critical time in terms of the practice of teaching. Many competing special interest groups have put new pressures on teachers with many different goals that are sometimes at odds with one another.

It is no surprise that within VOTE-COPE's acronym, the word "Education" is used twice. We, along with 600,000 New York State Teachers, must educate and support union-backed candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor. We must help to continue this fight to protect what has already been won and what we hope to achieve in the future.

VOTE-COPE contributions have a direct influence on every stage of your career, whether you are a new teacher, seasoned teacher, or retiree. Your VOTE-COPE donations affect the benefits of you and your loved ones.

(continued on page 3)

RICHARD GAZZOLA TEACHER CENTER

NEWS

Samantha Rosado-Ciriello,

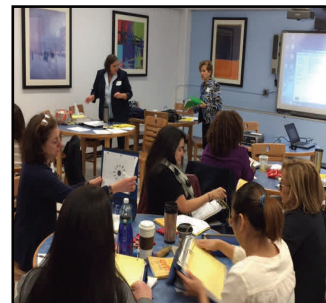
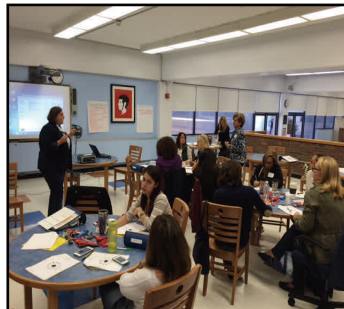
Director

Lia Council, Policy Board Chair

One Larkin Center

Yonkers, NY 10701

Phone 376-8614 FAX 376-3427



DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Due to the overwhelming success of our Defensive Driving class we will be offering two new dates for the class. As a result, the Richard Gazzola Teacher Center, in collaboration with the National Safety Council six hour program, will offer Defensive Driving for all Yonkers teachers, teaching assistants and their family members.

Registration will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis, with a maximum of 30 in a class. The cost of the program is **\$25 per person**. We must have the check before the course start date.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM:

- ◆ 10% discount on personal injury, bodily injury & property damage, liability coverage and collision.
- ◆ Discounts for 3 years
- ◆ Removal of up to 4 points

Check made out to: **Bill Troy, Instructor**

DATE: Saturday, January 30, 2016 **(1)**

Or

Saturday, March 5, 2016 **(2)**

TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Grinton Will Library
1500 Central Park Ave
Yonkers, NY 10710

Name _____

Address _____

School _____ Home _____
Cell# _____

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

Name: _____

Check#: _____ Date _____

Name: _____

Check#: _____ Date _____

Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, Director



Teachers Teaching Teachers

GET INVOLVED

As always, we would like to keep increasing teacher involvement with the Center. The Teacher Center is always looking for new ideas, new resources, and of course, new people to get involved. Please feel free to contact us with suggestions. If you have something to offer, ask about teaching a class or becoming a mentor. Course presenters are always sought. If you have never taken a class, ask a friend who has.

CATALOGUE

We anticipate our catalogue will be in your school sometime in December. Please take time to review all our courses and let us know how we can assist you in registering. The maximum allowance per class is 30 participants. A lottery will determine placement for all over-subscribed in-service courses.

CANCELLATIONS

Please note, in-service courses will be cancelled up to and including the first class if the course enrollment is insufficient. Scheduling conflicts may exist, please choose your courses carefully.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

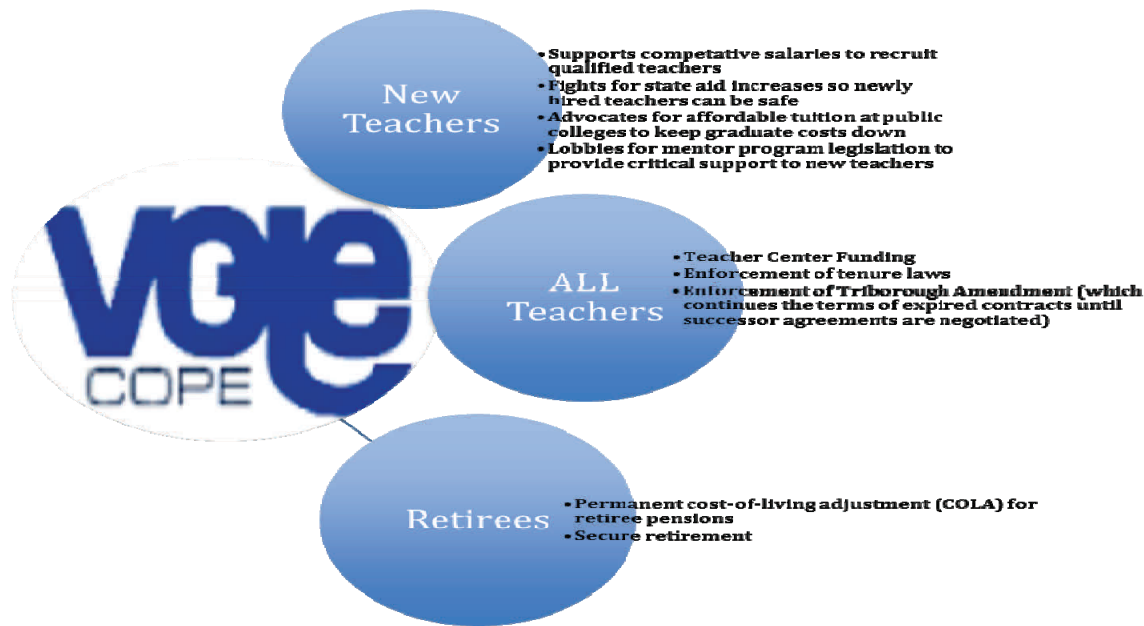
On November 3, 2015, the Teacher Center in collaboration with the Division of Teaching and Learning, Fordham University, and Learning Forward, continued the work of Learning Forward's Coaches Academy. We identified attributes of a learning community and focused on what the group hopes to accomplish this year, what each individual group's goals are and developing a shared sense of ownership/responsibility for future meetings.

As a result, teachers at the Cedar Place School, School 17 and Cornell Academy benefited from developing skills related to building relationships, leading professional learning, and individual and team involvement.

After the session, teachers requested a link to a video that we watched of a professional learning community in session and some in-class strategies that were implemented as a result.

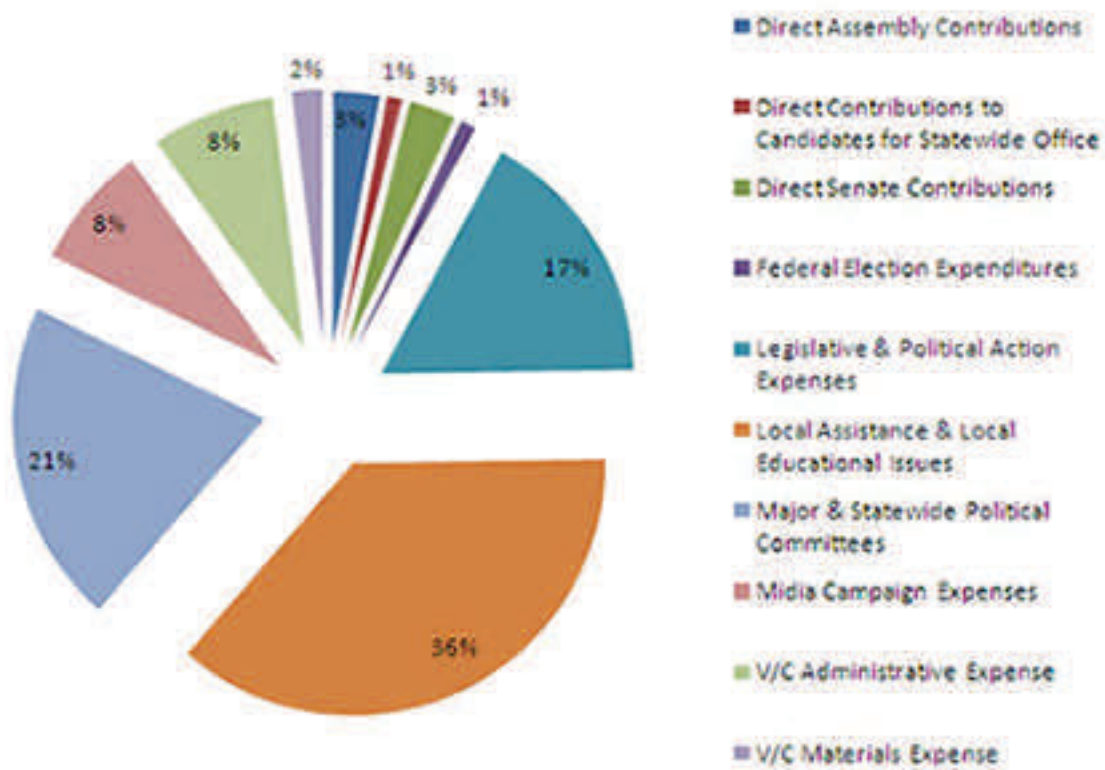
I hope you find it useful as well. <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=gr7aUrta27w>

How do my VOTE-COPE contributions affect me personally?



VOTE-COPE Contribution Distribution

VOTE-COPE contributions are not UNION DUES.



Who benefits from VOTE-COPE?

- All NYSUT Constituents & their dependents
- NYSUT retirees

What benefits from VOTE-COPE donations directly affect my family and me?

- Decent Working Conditions
- Affordable Health Coverage
- A secure retirement
- Affordable Prescription drugs

How do VOTE-COPE donations help my students?

- Works for resources to help students who are trying to reach higher standards
- Encourages smaller class sizes through legislation

How do my VOTE-COPE donations affect my profession?

- A permanent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for retiree pensions
- Affordable
- A secure retirement
- Affordable Prescription drugs

How can I increase my VOTE-COPE contribution?

- **If you are an in-service teacher**, complete the form below and **return it to the YFT Office**. Completed forms can be returned through inter-school mail to the YFT Office.
- **If you are a retired teacher**, please use the Vote-Cope Pension Deduction Authorization Form (*enclosed in your newsletter mailing*). Completed form should be mailed to: YFT, 35 East Grassy Sprain Road, Suite 501, Yonkers, NY 10710, Attention: John D. Eshoo

If you have any questions, please contact the YFT Office at YFT860@bestweb.net



Please complete the form below and **return to the YFT Office.**

VOIE Payroll Deduction Authorization Card

The undersigned authorizes (name of employer) Yonkers Public Schools
to deduct from each of my regular paychecks (or from one paycheck at a specific time) the sum of \$
and to forward that amount to VOTE-COPE, P.O. Box 5190, Albany, NY 12205-0190.

This authorization is made voluntarily and without fear of reprisal and with the understanding that the making of contributions to VOTE-COPE is not a condition of membership in any labor organization or of my employment and that VOTE-COPE will use the money it receives to make political contributions and expenditures in connection with federal, state and local elections. This authorization shall remain in full force and effect for all purposes while I am employed, or until revoked by me in writing.

Name _____ ID# _____

Phone # _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Address

VOTE-COPE is the New York State United Teachers' political action fund.

VOTE-COPE solicits and accepts only voluntary contributions.

Contributions or gifts to VOTE-COPE
are not tax deductible.

Local: 16-100

Welfare Fund News

Effective January 2016, if you have been a prior “no show” for an appointment with the **Attorney** or the **Financial Planner** there will be a **\$25.00 deposit required**. This new requirement is due to the large number of members failing to appear for scheduled appointments. As a result, allotted time goes unused while other members are left waiting weeks or months for an appointment.

The \$25 deposit will be returned to the individual upon arrival to the appointment. If you cancel within 24 hrs. of the appointment, your check will be returned to you. Any cancellations or no-shows the day of the scheduled appointment will result in the forfeiture of your \$25 deposit.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Georgia DeMuro at (914)793-0393.

Dates for the Legal Service are:

January 2016	Thursday 14 th and 28 th
February 2016	Thursday 11 th and 25 th
March 2016	Thursday 10 th and 17 th
April 2016	Thursday 14 th and 28 th
May 2016	Thursday 12 th and 26 th
June 2016	Thursday 9 th and 16 th

Call the Welfare Fund to schedule an appointment with the lawyer at (914)793-0393

Financial Planning Consultations:

Tuesday	January 26th, 2016
Tuesday	February 23rd, 2016
Tuesday	March 29th, 2016
Tuesday	April 26th, 2016
Tuesday	May 31st, 2016
Tuesday	June 14th, 2016

To schedule an appointment with the Financial Planner call 1-888-949-1925

****REMEMBER TO KEEP ENROLLMENT CARDS UP TO DATE****

If you move, get married, or have a child, we need to know! All membership information must be kept current with the YFT and the Welfare Fund.

**It's important to update your beneficiary information
for the \$5,000 death benefit as well.**

MOVEMENT TO WEAKEN TEACHERS' UNIONS

Ten California school teachers decided to challenge a California law authorizing teachers' unions to charge agency fees to non-members. Their case (**Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association**), which is supported and funded by the Center for Individual Rights, was filed in 2013 in a California federal district court. The case was fast tracked so it could apply for a hearing in the U.S. Supreme Court. On June 30, 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court decided it will hear this case. The two issues this case will deal with are:

Whether *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* should be overruled and public sector **agency shop** arrangements invalidated under the First Amendment; and

Whether it violates the First Amendment to require that public employees affirmatively object to subsidizing non chargeable speech by public sector unions rather than requiring that employees affirmatively consent to subsidizing such speech.

This case has broad implications for Teachers' Unions and all Public Sector Unions.

To understand how this movement evolved you need to know the following:

1935 – The U.S. Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (**NLRB**). This act guaranteed workers the right to join unions without reprisals. However, one facet of this act was the creation of the “closed shop “ (a worker who resists joining the union or fails to pay dues was required to be dismissed by the employer).

1947 – The Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress. This Act amended the **NLRB** ending the closed shop. Subsequent amendments made joining a union and paying dues optional. These amendments also indicated **that since the benefits of union membership, gained through collective bargaining, remains available to all workers, those who elect not to join are obligated to pay an Agency Fee in lieu of dues**. This only applied to unions and employees in the private sector.

1977 – The U.S. Supreme Court in the, **Abood v. Detroit Board of Education** case, which dealt with public employees paying agency fee, ruled that requiring non-members to pay an agency fee did not violate their rights under the First Amendment. In other words, the non-members must pay for the unions' efforts in fighting for better wages, benefits, working conditions, and protection of their contractual rights.

So if teachers have a legal right not to join the union and are only required to pay that portion of the union dues (**Agency Fee**) that goes to the cost of collective bargaining and the benefits negotiated, then why were Right To Work laws passed and where do they come from? The Taft Hartley Act has a loophole that would allow states to do away with agency fees altogether. That loophole is what we now know as the 'The Right to Work Laws': laws that permit non-union member employees to continue to get all the benefits of union representation and protection, *as is still the requirement of federal law*, **without having to pay for these benefits**. This past March Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin signed a bill that makes his state the 25th to adopt Right to Work laws.

There is concern with the 'Friedrichs v. California Teachers Associations' case now before the Supreme Court because on June 30, 2014 the Supreme Court in it's decision in the Harris v. Quinn case said, in some cases, unions could not collect fees from one particular class of public employees who did not want to join the union. This decision did not over rule the 1997 decision upholding agency fee; however, Justice Samuel Alito in his ruling said: "No person in this country may be compelled to subsidize speech by a third party."

If the issues, in the current case are upheld by a majority of the Court, I am sure you can sense the impact on all teacher unions. What will teacher unions do to stay strong? The more important question for us is: **What can we as YFT members, both in-service and retirees, do to keep our union - YFT - strong?**

In Solidarity,
John D. Eshoo
YFT Retiree Rep.

THE YFT— ALWAYS IN



YFT members Kirk Bauer and Kara Popiel, along with students from Lincoln High School, participated in the *Yonkers Chamber of Commerce Women In Business Furniture Drive*, helping to furnish local families.



Councilwoman Pineda-Isaac's 2nd Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament was held at the Yonkers Middle High School. It was a huge success with close to 80 kids, ranging from 13 to 18 years old, participating from all over Yonkers. The YFT donated funds for their pizza party.

OUR COMMUNITY !

The “Stuff-a-Bus”
Pajama & Book Drive
took place at Dodson
this month. The dona-
tions will help local chil-
dren in need!



The NYSUT Making
Strides Against
Breast Cancer walk
was on October 18th
on a very cold Sun-
day morning! The
YFT raised over
\$7,500 for the
American Cancer
Society!



Members of the
YFT showed
their support
for Mayor Mike
Spano as he ran
a victorious race
for another
term as Mayor
of Yonkers.

Formative Assessment.....An Excerpt from *Education Week*

Formative assessment is one of the most widely used-but poorly understood-instructional techniques. This special report highlights common misconceptions about the approach and shows how formative assessment differs from other kinds of assessments, such as summative or benchmark tests. It also illuminates some ways that educators can use formative assessment in their classrooms to find out on the spot whether students are really "getting it."

Three camps of thought on formative assessment:

- Quick, actionable assessments that provide teachers with information along the way, like mini-benchmark or mini-summative test

- Teachers don't just gain insight into their students, they also learn about their own instructional practice and see what they should reteach or teach next and what strategies worked and didn't work

- Teaching practices designed to help students understand what their learning goals are, figure out how far they are from those goals, and what they must do to get there.

Most agree, however, that formative assessment is something that takes place during the process of instruction and is immediately used to inform subsequent instruction, as opposed to interim or benchmark tests, which are typically more standardized and take place at planned, specified junctures.

Q&A: Misconceptions about Formative Assessment: Interview with Richard J. Stiggins By Catherine Gewertz

Q: WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST AREAS OF MISUNDERSTANDING ARE ABOUT FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AMONG EDUCATORS?

A: I think one big misunderstanding is among policymakers at all levels. [It's] the mistaken belief that somehow annual accountability standardized testing improves schools. It's not that I'm opposed to assessment at that level, but the obsessive belief that somehow this is the application of assessment that will improve schools flies in the face of everything we know.

A second misunderstanding is that people are tending to think about formative assessment as an event, rather than a process. The way we have to think about it is that we engage in the ongoing, day-to-day classroom-assessment process to give teachers and their students the information they need to understand what comes next in the learning. It isn't a one-time event.

Another misunderstanding is our failure to understand the role of the emotional dynamics of being evaluated from the student's point of view. For formative purposes, those dynamics have to center on keeping students believing in themselves. It isn't merely about getting teachers more information so they can make better instructional decisions. Good formative assessment keeps students believing that success is within reach if they keep trying.

Q: TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THIS IDEA ABOUT STUDENTS BEING ENGAGED IN THE PROCESS.

A: This idea arises from a researcher and assessment expert in Australia; his name is Royce Sadler. What he said to us is, we use formative assessment productively when we use it in the instructional context to do three things. One is to keep students understanding the achievement target they're aspiring to. The second is to use the assessment process to help them understand where they are now in relation to that expectation. And the third is to use the assessment process to help students understand how to close the gap between the two. Do you see where the locus of control resides? It's with the student.

Q: SHOULD FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS EVER BE GRADED?

A: Anything and everything that students do by way of their work, or their performance, needs to be evaluated, to be sure, in terms of very specific, preset performance criteria that are known to the teacher and the student. So for example, in diagnosis, the judgments about student performance in relation to those criteria help to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. And, of course, diagnosis is, how do you rely on the strengths to overcome the weaknesses? To provide feedback, we need to help students know how to do better. Judgments about how they're doing in relation to those performance criteria will reveal that to them and to their teacher.

We need to keep good records so that we can track student changes over time. But [in the formative] context, there's really never a need to assign a letter grade in this context. My admonition to teachers is, while the learning is going on, and we're diagnosing and providing that good feedback, the grade book remains closed.

There is a variation on this theme that is important. That is, can formative evidence ever serve summative purposes? And the answer is clearly, "yes." If I have information from the formative application of assessment in my classroom that reveals a higher level of achievement than was revealed by, for example, a unit final exam, then it's my responsibility to use the best evidence I have to determine, for example, a student's report-card grade. So yes, the barrier between the two can come down, but only under those very specific circumstances.

The full article can be found at: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/11/11/searching-for-clarity-on-formative-assessment.html>

WITH A HEAVY HEART, THE WELFARE FUND WOULD LIKE TO INFORM OUR MEMBERS OF THE TEACHERS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY SINCE APRIL 2015.....

Helen Jarczyński	Retired Emerson High School
Larry Linden	Active Lincoln High School
Angelo D'Agostino	Retired Gorton High School
Francis Consagra	Retired Hawthorne
Dorothy Kaufman	Retired Gorton High School
Joan Bodisch	Dependent Member
Dorothy Turchinsky	Retired School 13
Edmund Magat	Retired Yonkers High School
Dorothy Pickens	Retired Roosevelt High School
Raymond Cheron	Retired Saunders High School
Gail Nirenberg	Retired Emerson High School
Carrie Thompson	Retired School 25
Josephine Prisco	Retired School 30

IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of Vincent A. Coviello-also affectionately known to many as "Uncle Vinny" or "Uncle Vincenzo"- who passed away on November 6, 2015 after an extended illness.

Born in the Bronx on November 7, 1929 to the late Joseph and Rose Coviello, Vincent graduated from Mt. St. Michael Academy (1947) and Manhattan College (1951). He served in the army during the Korean War with the Counter Intelligence Corp., for the most part stationed in Germany. Initially, Vinny worked in a family-owned delicatessen in the Bronx. In 1965, Vincent began teaching business and computer science as well as coaching baseball and track at Commerce High School and, upon the closure of that school in 1974, the "new" Yonkers High School. Vinny loved teaching, and was held in extremely high regard by his colleagues and all his students – many of whom hold various positions in the Yonkers Public Schools today.

Vinny retired from teaching in the early 1990s in order to devote his full attention to the management of the Yonkers Teachers Federal Credit Union, of which he was assistant Treasurer from 1967-1974,, and then Treasurer from 1974 until he retired in 2007– a total of forty years. Literally hundreds of individuals have stated over the years, "If it hadn't been for Uncle Vinny and his guidance, compassion, and understanding, I wouldn't have...." There are almost as many positive endings to this sentence as there are Credit Union members. Vinny didn't simply offer answers to the individual problems of Credit Union members, he offered solutions. For these reasons and more, he was considered to be an extended family member by those who knew him; hence, he became known as "Uncle Vinny/Vincenzo."

Vinny is survived by his wife, Joan; daughter Marianne Costa; son James Coviello; grandchildren Joseph Anthony Coviello, Brittany Costa, Elizabeth Ann Costa, and Justin Coviello; and sister Mrs. Elizabeth (John) DeVito. One son, Joseph John Coviello, predeceased him.

Vinny will always remain in our minds and in our hearts as a friend, teacher, mentor, advisor, and enabler who always gave freely of his time to teach, guide, and assist others.

The family has requested that anyone wishing to contribute in memory of Vincent to please send donations to the National Parkinson Foundation by mail to: 200 SE 1st Street, Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131 or through their website at <http://www.parkinson.org/>

DECEMBER CALENDAR



2nd	3:45pm	Executive Board	YFT
10th	3:45pm	Building Assembly	Roosevelt
14th	7:00pm	YCPTA	Foxfire
16th	7:00pm	BOE Stated Meeting	Saunders
16th	3:45pm	Executive Board	YFT

Contractual Reminder regarding TAs Subbing

Please be reminded:

"In cases where a teacher in a class **to which a teaching assistant is regularly assigned** is absent the teaching assistant may, **by mutual agreement** between the Board of Education and the teaching assistant, be used as a substitute teacher for that class. In such cases, the teaching assistant shall follow the schedule of the teacher for which the teaching assistant is substituting. **Teaching assistants shall not be used for the sole purpose of providing prep periods during the school day.**" [Emphasis added] –Article 25, B (4)

Building Reps: If TAs are being used to cover classes, not by mutual consent and/or not for the teacher to whom they are regularly assigned, please refer your principal to this contractual provision. If the practice does not cease, please contact the YFT office for further assistance.

Corrections & Updates

- * Sincere apologies for the misinformation that was printed in remembrance of Dorothy Picken in last month's newsletter. Dottie was a Chemistry teacher at Roosevelt, not a Biology teacher.
- * NYSUT RA Update: Emi Castro's position as a delegate was mischaracterized as Jen Lorio, so Emi will represent us all, as she has done many times in the past.



*Season of giving, season of thanks.
Happy Thanksgiving from our
YFT family to yours!*