

THE **Yonkers** Teacher

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nysut
A Union of Professionals



As we begin another school year, these are some important matters that you should take special note of:

YFT Building Rep

There are several items to stay on top of this year and the best way to do that is to make sure your school has a YFT Building Representative to attend our monthly YFT meetings at Roosevelt-Early College High School. You will stay informed by attending school union meetings that should be occurring. Some reps hold the meetings the Friday or Monday after. If for some reason your rep cannot attend a meeting, try to help out and offer to sub in their place.

NYSUT's MAC

We asked everyone to sign up for the Member Action Center (MAC) on NYSUT's website. It is an easy way to send thousands of messages to our state legislators. They write the laws that govern our livelihood. Need I say more? Go to www.NYSUT.org and find the "MAC" app for your phone. Don't be silent, be active!

Sheri G. Lederman Lawsuit

Presently, after much push back from the state, a teacher has successfully reached a hearing in court suing the legitimacy of her APPR state evaluation rating. If you want further information, research *Sheri G. Lederman Lawsuit*. A decision is expected by December. Appeals to the decision can be expected. NYSUT legal is fighting alongside.

Opt Out Movement

The opt out movement 2014-2015 was a strong message to NYSED. I'm not sure they are listening. No money is being withheld from any school district. Opt out rates in urban districts were generally lower than suburban areas. Some of them were: NYC 2%, Syracuse 6%, Yonkers 7%, Buffalo 9% and Rochester 15%. The reason most likely is the overwhelming fear of lost federal funds. We will have to see what 2015-2016 brings. Over 50% of the public supports the right to opt out.

APPR for 2015-2016 School Year

There is **no new evaluation for this school year**. Negotiations will be starting soon. It is never prudent to discuss publically negotiations. Your building reps hear what and where we stand, which is why it is so important for them to attend our monthly meetings.

Receivership

You should have received information regarding the new receivership law which allows the Superintendent extended powers over certain buildings. Your "MAC" texts will be most important in this matter. NYSUT will be holding an informational meeting on October 20th at the Doubletree in Tarrytown. To register please contact the YFT as soon as possible at yft860@bestweb.net and provide your full name, school, phone number and email.

Contract

This is our second year beginning without a contract. City Hall does not seem too worried. There will be more discussed on this matter at Building Assembly.

(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

WELCOME BACK

We hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable summer. To all of our returning teachers, welcome back; and to our new teachers, welcome to Yonkers. The Richard Gazzola Teacher Center was established in 1988 through a grant from New York State as a result of New York State United Teachers' (NYSUT) efforts. We serve public and non-public schools of Yonkers. The Center is comprised of one director, Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, and an administrative assistant, Miriam Rodriguez. It is governed by a Policy Board composed of a majority of teachers, as well as administrators, a representative of higher education, the business community, parents, and non-public schools.

The Richard Gazzola Teacher Center collaborates with all stakeholders to offer courses that support district and state initiatives, as well as providing support to new and seasoned teachers, aimed at improving and enhancing teaching and student learning. Our courses are taught by teachers to teachers. If anyone has an idea they would like to share with their colleagues, consider submitting a resume along with an application to teach a course either in person or online.

Applications are located on our website at www.rgteachercenter.org or call the Teacher Center and one will be mailed or interofficed to you. All applications and resumes must be approved by the Teacher Center Policy Board. We hope to have a catalogue ready for distribution to the schools by **November**.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING The Defensive Driving Class was a success. As a result, the Richard Gazzola Teacher Center, in collaboration with the National Safety Council 6 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 and removal of up to 4 points

CHECK MADE TO: Bill Troy, Instructor

MAIL CHECK TO:

Richard Gazzola Teacher Center
One Larkin Center
Yonkers, NY 10701

DATE: Saturday, November 7, 2015
TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Grinton Will Library
1500 Central Park Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10710

Name: _____

Address: _____

School: _____ **HomePhone:** _____

Cell Phone: _____

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

Name: _____

Check#: _____ **Date** _____

Name: _____

Check#: _____ **Date** _____

**Samantha Rosado-Ciriello,
Director**



Teachers Teaching Teachers

(Continued from cover)

The Year Ahead...

There is much to do this year. There are difficult challenges before us. Let us not forget our history as a union and the debt we owe our colleagues of the past, those who built this union, picketing in the rain and snow. With our gratitude and appreciation of their efforts, know that very little will get done without **every member pulling together**. Every member, working together, is what built a strong union. That is how labor laws were passed in Albany, in much tougher times! We will prevail, if we as a school, as a local, as a state teachers' union, all do our part. It only takes a small part of your day to send an email.

Some ways to take action and remain informed:

*Make sure the YFT has your personal email address. To notify the YFT Office email your information to: YFT860@bestweb.net. Make sure to **include your full name, your school, your position (for example: teacher, TA, social worker...)** and the personal email address to which you wish to receive YFT correspondence.

*Text *NYSUT* to the number 38470 to join NYSUT's Text Tuesday movement.

*Check out the *Yonkers Federation of Teachers* Facebook page.

*Help out your YFT Building Rep. Even small actions like helping to stuff mailboxes at your school with YFT correspondence is helpful!

Remember to rejoin the union if you have been out on a leave, are recently returning after having been out for an extended period of time, have changed position from TA to teacher, are a regular sub beginning a new position or did not previously fill out enrollment forms. If you have questions or are unsure of your membership status, please contact the YFT Office at (914)793-0200.

“Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”
-President John F. Kennedy

In Solidarity,

Pat Puleo, YFT President

UNION DUES ADJUSTMENT



NYSUT and AFT have raised their dues amounts. As a result, our dues will be higher during the **2015 - 2016** school year.

Teachers will see a total increase of \$16.60 for the year.
TAs earning more than \$34,000 will see an increase of \$13.30.
TAs earning under \$34,000 will see an increase of \$10.80.

Educational Issues

At Issue

September begins a busy month of preparation and acclimation to a new roster of students-- and perhaps even new colleagues and administrators. Welcome, everyone! The **Ed Issues Committee** aims to keep you informed of the latest news on education that affects teachers across our district, our state, and our nation.

As you begin your 2015-2016 academic year, please note these calendar dates:

Early September: Your composite score from the previous school year should be made available to you. (From a total of 100 points: 60 pts from NYSUT 's Teacher Practice Rubric aligned to NYS teaching standards which is made up of 31 pts from classroom observations, 29 pts from the Professional Development portion. 20 pts are from your state assessment and 20 pts are from your local assessment).

By the end of October: Teachers are required to choose two indicators as their goals from the NYSUT rubric (see example on pg. 80 of APPR) and submit on the Professional Growth and Activity Form. Teachers do not need to meet with their administrators to develop or write their goals; they are only to present their goals to the administrator from the NYSUT rubric.

End of November: First formal observation should be completed. Teachers will be notified 5 days prior to the observation. Pre and post observation conferences are optional and often suggested to stimulate conversation, therefore no questions or answers are to be written or submitted. If you and your administrator mutually agree to a post conference, the meeting should occur within two weeks of the observation and the teacher should receive a written copy of the observation signed by the administrator at that time.

May/early June: Your second formal observation (or third for non tenured teachers) should be completed with a two week time frame built into the schedule for a post conference meeting.

September-June: Tenured teachers receive two formal evaluations and eight walk-through observations; non-tenured teachers receive three formal evaluations and seven walk-through observations.

If there is any information written on an evaluation that you disagree with, sign the evaluation and write "Comments will be forthcoming and attached."

Keep in Mind:

If your administrator(s) left empty boxes on your observation form this means they have not seen evidence of that indicator. It is up to you to show evidence at a post conference meeting. Your administrator should incorporate such evidence into your evaluation and provide an updated signed copy. Make sure that the administrator has signed the observation before you sign it.

If your administrator does not incorporate your evidence write, “*Comments to follow*” above your signature and write a response.

Have your Building Rep review your response before submission or contact your area Vice President (High School/Elementary/Special Areas) at YFT860@bestweb.net

Begin to gather evidence of your professional practice now. Use a binder, box, envelope, expansion file or folder to collect: letters sent home, telephone logs, emails to parents, scheduled meetings with parents, student attendance, attendance at district workshops, college coursework, school based committees, field trips, union activities, PTA, community volunteer hours, professional magazine subscriptions, and so on.

You can take pictures of classroom events, culminating activities, and bulletin boards that demonstrate student assignments, highlights, and exemplary work.

If you receive a Professional Annual Evaluation Composite Score (PAECS) rating of “Ineffective 0-64” or “Developing 65-74,” you have the right to an appeal-- and are encouraged to do so.

Pay prompt attention to the appeals process timeline particularly for an Ineffective rating in Section F of the APPR. You must do what is fair for you according to your rights under the APPR.

Download the complete APPR apps to your iPhone or iPad @ www.nysut.org/-/media/NYSUT/Resources/2013/April/TED/2012_SED

WE ARE MORE THAN TEACHERS who instruct specific skills and content according to a curriculum and developmental level.

WE ARE EDUCATORS... trained specialists in the theories and methods of education. We teach, inform, and inspire future generations of human beings to love, respect, and invigorate our planet and to think for themselves.

YFT at Relay for Life

The Yonkers Relay for Life returned to Gorton High School on June 13th, 2015 with 30 teams in participation. This year the Yonkers Federation of Teachers' schools were asked to create raffle baskets for our on-site fundraising. Special thanks to Karen Liberatore (PEARLS) and Christopher Liberatore for running our on-site fundraising tent. With their sales initiative and welcoming demeanor, the Relay participants revisited many times throughout the evening. Thank you to Carolina Carreira (PEARLS) and Nelson Carreira for assisting with the fundraising. Monique Anderson (Scholastic 18) and her daughter Kennidi Anderson also participated and assisted with fundraising on-site. The Yonkers Federation of Teachers team looks forward to more team members next year. We also thank you for assisting with the event in whatever capacity you were able to.

The following individuals donated to our Team on-line:

Arline and Steve Frey
Kevin and Marie Gorman
Michael Boraczek
Margaret Ribeiro-Radbell
Penny Kelly
Kerry Gorman
The Yonkers Federation of Teachers
Meaghan Gorman
Florence McCue

The following schools and individuals created baskets which raised over \$ 230.00 on-site with our Ring Around the Duck Game:

Martin Luther King School
Casimir Pulaski School- (3) iTunes Gift Cards
PEARLS Hawthorne Elementary-
(2) Summer Baskets
Patricia A. DiChiaro-Summer Basket
School 16
Khalil Gibran School
Kerry Gorman-Yankee Tickets and Yankee Towel
Yonkers Montessori Academy
E. Gorman and F. Maselli and School 5-
First Aid Build-a-Bear

The following schools donated monetary amounts in exchange for American Cancer Society Feet and Cupcake Cut Outs. The cut outs decorated a seven foot long trail that led to a large birthday cake decoration. The decorations were created by Erin Gorman's first grade class at PEARLS Hawthorne. The students wanted to remind everyone that the American Cancer Society and your donations are increasing birthdays by taking steps to end cancer :

PEARLS Hawthorne
School 5
School 17

Many YFT members donated by means of lighting Luminarias. The Luminarias were decorated and lit around the track. They emotionally lit the way for the participants of the event who wanted to remember a loved one or honor a loved one who has had cancer.

The bags were decorated by individual members, Mala Mahase Lipes' Class and Ms. Liz McCann's Art Club at PEARLS Hawthorne Elementary School.

Teachers from the following schools purchased Luminarias:

School 17	School 5	PEARLS Hawthorne
Scholastic Academy	Yonkers Middle/High	Casimir Pulaski
Enrico Fermi	Lincoln High School	School 27
	Patricia DiChiaro	



THANK YOU TO OUR RETIREES!

YFT President Pat Puleo thanks NYSUT Retirees, the Retired Educators and Children Together (REACT) Committee for delivering over 190 pencil boxes filled with school supplies for every 2nd grade student at the Martin Luther King School and the Enrico Fermi School in early September. The supplies are purchased by committee members through donations by NYSUT retirees from all over Westchester County. The Committee members plan on returning in the spring to read stories to the students. The books will then be given to the teachers for their classroom libraries. This is the sixth year pencil boxes have been given to a district in Westchester County.





Your vote is your voice!



AFL-CIO Endorsed Candidates:

Local Races

Brendon Fitzgerald (R), Peekskill City Council
Christina Fischer (R), Peekskill City Council
Karen D'Attore (D/WF/I), Ossining Town Council
*Manuel Quezada (D/WF), Ossining Village Trustee
*Milagros Lecuona (D/WF/I), White Plains Common Council
Diana Quast (D), Yorktown Town Clerk
*Gary Raniolo (R), Yorktown Town Justice
Nancy Sorbella (D/WF), Kent Town Council
*Dr. Richard Becker (D/WF), Cortlandt Town Trustee
Mark Jaffe (D/WF/I), Harrision Trustee
Maria Slippen (D/WF/I), Croton Village Trustee
*Christopher Johnson (D), Yonkers City Council, District 1
*Michael Sabatino (D), Yonkers City Council, District 3
*Barry Fertel (D), New Rochelle City Council, District 5
*Frank Catalina (R/I/C), Peekskill Mayor
Ruth Hassell-Thompson (D/WF), Mt. Vernon Mayor
*Mike Spano (D/WF), Yonkers Mayor
Dana Levenberg (D/WF/I), Ossining Supervisor
Andrew Falk (D), Town of Patterson Supervisor
Sam Oliverio Jr. (D/I), Putnam Valley Town Supervisor
*Maureen Fleming (D/WF/I), Kent Town Supervisor

Westchester County Legislature

Karen Schleimer (D/WF), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 2
John Diaconis (D/WF/I), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 3
*Benjamin Boykin (D), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 5
*Catherine Borgia (D), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 9
*MaryJane Shimsky (D), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 12
*Lyndon Williams (D), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 13
Christine Peters (D), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 14
*Ken Jenkins (D/WF/I), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 16
Piedad Abreu (D), Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 17

Judicial Races

*Adrian Armstrong (D), Mt. Vernon City Court Judge
Gretchen Walsh (D), Supreme Court 9th JD
*Brandon Sall (D/WF/I), Westchester County Surrogate's Court
Helen Blackwood (D), Westchester County Court, 9th JD
*Susan Cacace (D), Westchester County Court, 9th JD

*denotes incumbent

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY,
NOVEMBER 3rd!**

It matters for politicians to know, that when NYSUT speaks
about our 600,000 members, that **we vote.**

Welfare Fund News

FORMS & INFORMATION

- ◆ YOU NEED TO REJOIN THE UNION AND THE WELFARE FUND IF YOU GO OUT ON A FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA) OR ANY OTHER LEAVE, INCLUDING ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNS WHO RETURN TO THE CLASSROOM. 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 FUND ENROLLMENT CARD
 - *YFT MEMBERSHIP DUES DEDUCTION CARD
 - *VOTE/COPE FORM
- ◆ TEACHERS WHO UNDERGO CHANGES IN MARITAL STATUS THROUGH MARRIAGE (MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE IS REQUIRED TO COVER YOUR SPOUSE), DIVORCE, OR DEATH. THESE CHANGES REQUIRE A NEW WELFARE FUND ENROLLMENT CARD.
- ◆ TO ADD A CHILD (THROUGH BIRTH OR ADOPTION) YOU MUST COMPLETE NEW WELFARE ENROLLMENT CARDS. THESE CHANGES REQUIRE A COPY OF THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE.
- ◆ IF YOU WISH TO CHANGE THE BENEFICIARY OF YOUR \$5,000.00 DEATH BENEFIT, A NEW WELFARE FUND ENROLLMENT CARD NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED.
- ◆ IF YOUR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER CHANGES, YOU MUST NOTIFY THE WELFARE FUND OFFICE AT (914) 793-0393.
- ◆ ANY TEACHER THAT WAS A PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE TEACHER IN 2014-2015 AND WAS REHIRED MUST COMPLETE ALL NEW FORMS FOR THE UNION AND WELFARE FUND.

STUDENT STATUS

- ◆ ANY DEPENDENT CHILD WHO IS OVER 19 YEARS OLD REQUIRES SCHOOL STATUS TO BE COVERED BY THE WELFARE FUND. COVERAGE WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE AGE OF 25 IF THEY ARE A STUDENT. UNLIKE THE MEDICAL PLAN, COVERAGE ENDS FOR YOUR CHILD ON THEIR 19TH BIRTHDAY OR 25TH BIRTHDAY. CONTACT THE WELFARE FUND FOR THE NECESSARY VERIFICATION FORM.

RETIREE INFORMATION

- ◆ WHEN SUBMITTING ANY FORMS FOR PAYMENT, PLEASE WRITE “**RETIRED**” IN THE SPACE WHERE THE SCHOOL/BUILDING IS REQUESTED.

YONKERS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS WELFARE FUND

35 EAST GRASSY SPRAIN ROAD, SUITE 502

YONKERS, NY 10710

(914) 793-0393

YFT MEMBERS INDUCTED INTO THE TEACHER HALL OF FAME!

The Yonkers Board of Education inducted Tiffany Soares, Joseph Giannantonio, and Dr. Dean Saghafi-Ezaz into the Teacher Hall of Fame during its June 17, 2015 Stated Meeting.

For the past sixty years the Kiwanis Club of Yonkers, in cooperation with the Yonkers Board of Education, has given recognition to public school teachers who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, made significant contributions to the school community and engaged in activities that have led to student growth and development. Historically, one teacher who meets these criteria is selected each year from a slate of nominees to be inducted into the Yonkers Teacher Hall of Fame.

In 2015, the Mayor of the City of Yonkers joined the tribute awarding annual recognitions to outstanding elementary and secondary Yonkers teachers. Nominations are submitted online by students, parents/guardians and colleagues.

A reception honoring Ms. Soares, Mr. Giannantonio and Dr. Saghafi-Ezaz took place Thursday, June 18, 2015 at the Riverview.



Tiffany Soares began her career in the Yonkers Public Schools in October 1999 as a substitute teacher. In September 2000, Tiffany joined the Paideia School 15 faculty as a third grade teacher and in 2010 moved into her current position in grade five.

As a student in the Yonkers Public Schools, attending School 8, Walt Whitman Middle School and graduating from Roosevelt High School, Tiffany attributes her passion for teaching and learning to many of her teachers.

Today, Tiffany inspires her students' writing by sharing her sixth grade journal. Ninth grade English teacher Mr. Kaplan sparked her love for Shakespeare; Tiffany is paying it forward with the Paideia Players Shakespeare Program.

Nominated by a parent of a current student, she wrote, "Mrs. Soares is the kind of teacher you dream about for your child. Her knowledge, passion and enthusiasm come through in everything that she does."

Joseph Giannantonio is a special education teacher. He began his tenure in Yonkers in September 1996 at Westchester Hills School 29 and taught at Schools 9 and 21. In 1999, Joseph returned to Westchester Hills School 29 where he currently teaches sixth through eighth grade students with Autism.

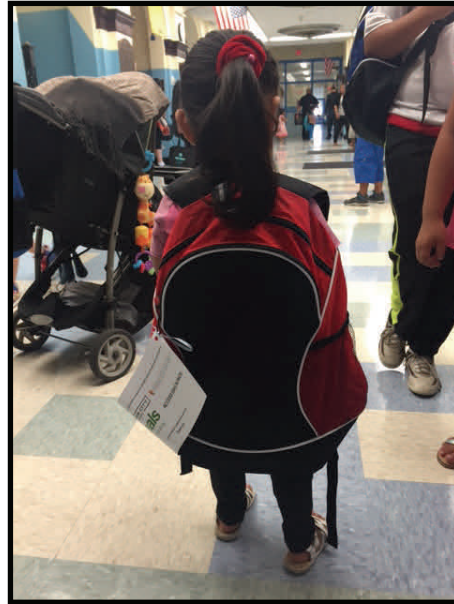
Mr. Giannantonio life's calling as special education teacher was inspired by his brother Anthony's special needs from birth and his mother Maria's dedication to provide his brother a meaningful life.

Nominated by his co-workers who wrote, "Mr. G, as he is known to his students, has something that all great teachers possess... the ability to make every student feel good about themselves. He creates an incredible learning environment... where students feel safe, loved and respected. He is an educator in the fullest sense of the word to hundreds of students, instilling confidence, determination, and an educational foundation upon which many amazing lives have been built. He makes working with the most challenging students seem easy. So many staff members look to Joe for guidance, advice, help with technology, help with students and everyday 'handy man' tasks. Simply defined, he is one of a kind."



Dr. Dean Saghafi-Ezaz embraced Lincoln High School in 2006 as a biology teacher. During his tenure at Lincoln, with the support of the administration, Dr. Saghafi-Ezaz developed the school's Program for Scientific Inquiry.

Dr. Saghafi-Ezaz's philosophy of teaching and learning is reflective of his students' accolades. "I believe that every student, regardless of their academic level, is entitled to an equal education. This education includes providing opportunities for students that subjects them to real life experiences and teaches them 21st century skills. Part of the educational experience is to have students understand that a person continues to learn for the rest of their life. I try to improve the achievement levels of my students by providing them with a nurturing and supportive environment, which allows them to freely express themselves in the classroom. Since each student is a unique individual, I try to understand their needs and provide them with the things that will allow them to academically flourish."



Mayor Mike Spano's BACKPACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE



**This September make your school a place you want to go
to, even on the bad days!**

Students, parents and teachers deserve to have a great school year. Even if you worked during the summer, you have been away from your students for over two months. Let the students and parents know that you are rested and happy to be back. Make the next ten months be part of the best school year ever!

September should be a time of new beginnings. Real change happens in the classroom. Change some methods that you use, expand some methods and identify methods that are just right. Offer some workshops in your school in order to share what you have learned and to help your fellow teachers. Brag about your classes and your students and about your fellow teachers. It is time to stand up and cheer for Yonkers teachers!

Our members are a valuable source of positive public relations for our schools. Many of you have never had to strike and this year layoffs have been averted. We should be pleased. Talk to parents, colleagues and community members about professional groups that you belong to, about the advanced degrees you have, about why you enjoy teaching and about why Yonkers teachers are an asset to the district.

Our students are our future. Parents should hear something good about their children. You may be the only one who takes the time to let those children and their parents know how important they are. It is worth the effort to find something good to say, even during times of distress. Remember, our students are our future in many ways.

The union has worked hard to make teaching a great profession. However, it is only as strong as its members. If you want to continue enjoying the privileges of the job, then now might be a great time to commit to working in one of the many groups that function throughout the year. Elections are coming. If you already volunteer a day for political action, try to add an extra day. If this is not your forte, there are many other committees that need your help.

Remember, you are the union and you are needed!

OCTOBER CALENDAR

5th	7:00pm	YCPTA	Saunders Library
7th	3:45pm	Executive Board	YFT
15th	3:45pm	Building Assembly	Roosevelt
18th	9:30am	Making Strides Walk	Manhattanville College
21st	7:00pm	BOE Stated Meeting	Saunders
21st	3:45pm	Executive Board	YFT

