President’s Message

I would like to start off by thanking all of you who took the time to become “politically involved” by signing one of the letters we sent to our legislators, used the Member Action Center on NYSUT’s and our webpage to send faxes and sign petitions, or directly contacted your local legislator on any of the numerous issues in education we faced from Albany over the last few months.

Our effort along with the activism of our union brothers and sisters across the state may not have landed us exactly what we wanted, but it did make a big difference. While Tier VI has been created, the current version is still significantly “less worse” than the Tier VI that was original proposed by the Governor that included a 401k style option that would put current members future pension payments in jeopardy. Just over $10 million was return in the budget to fund Teacher Centers, including ours. While still less than state TRC funding of the past, better than receiving no money at all. Gone from the passed budget is the Governors plan to make districts and members pay for the cost of 3020a hearings. Back into the NY State Education aide funding is most of the $250 million that was set aside for competitive grants.

Settled is an agreement on APPR that does not include a number of significant issues that the Governor was threatening to implement if an agreement wasn’t reached between NYSUT and NYSED.

However, our fight is not yet over, as there still exists a threat that Districts and locals that do not come to an APPR agreement by early next year will face mid-year state-aid funding cuts. There is still significant concern about the potential release of teachers ratings to the general public.

At the local level, now is the time to consider becoming involved in a WTA position. The At-large negotiators will be elected on Thursday, April 19th. The week after that we begin the nomination process for selection building reps and building negotiators. Our newly passed contract expires on June 30th 2013, so our newly elected negotiators will begin the process again early in the next school year.

Thank you for all your support and activism,

Jason Carter

WTA At-large Negotiators Election—April 19th
Candidates below. (3 open positions)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Marc Binsack</th>
<th>Patricia Brennan</th>
<th>Cindy Coomber</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Eagle</td>
<td>Michele Farley</td>
<td>Heather Herendeen</td>
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Congratulations to our very own Beth Peters for winning the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Western New York School Counselor Consortium organization at the conference on 2/8/2012. What an honor to be elected by her colleagues. Now what Beth? Is there anything higher than a Lifetime Achievement Award?

Issues Currently Being Discussed/Explored
* Retirement Date
* APPR Committees
* Work Load
* Class Size
* Assessments
* State Mandates

If the Governor thinks he is the only advocate for children, I wonder why he is making such terrible decision for them! Maybe we should go tell him how to do his job!

Trivia

Teachers in grades 4-8 who teach certain subjects will receive student growth scores in June of 2012. However, those scores can not be used in their annual evaluations unless a specific event / process takes place first.

What are the subject areas?
What is the process / event?
The first unit member to contact Jeff Trout with the correct answer will receive a $15 Lowes gift certificate.

Enjoy!
Is personal embarrassment and individual blame really Albany’s idea of effective education reform?

Recent reports in tabloid newspapers included teachers’ names and personal information. This set off a flurry of unfair personal attacks and blatant misinformation about teachers. Unless Albany does something about it soon, we can expect more of the same.

Take action now at the NYSUT Member Action Center to tell legislators to support the confidentiality of teacher evaluation information... and share this message with your friends and colleagues!

In addition to sending a fax – you can make a personal phone call to the Governor and your legislators’ offices via 1-877-255-9417.

Union activism makes a difference in budget outcome

State law makers are in the process of approving a $132.5 billion state budget, with final enactment expected by Friday.

NYSUT leaders noted that $805 million in school aid was restored from last year’s historic $1.3 billion in cuts to K-12 schools. And in higher education, SUNY and CUNY four-year campuses were held harmless from cuts, while community colleges received a significant increase of $150 per full-time equivalent student. SUNY hospitals also received much-needed additional funding in the amount of $27.8 million.

This was all thanks to non-stop activism on the part of NYSUT’s grassroots lobbyists and legislative staff. (See highlights on K-12 and on higher ed on Leader Access.)

Nonetheless, this spending plan does not go far enough to put New York back on track to restore the quality programs that students have lost in recent years. “In fact, because of the property tax cap passed last year, districts across the state are cutting programs and laying off even more educators,” said NYSUT President Dick Innnuzzi.

March 14 55/25 Retirement Option Safe

NYSUT members who elected to retire under Chapter 45 in 2010 can rest easy.

The court ruling that upheld the 55/25 early retirement option will not be appealed by the plaintiffs, and the time for doing so has now expired. The law enabled NYSUT members in public schools and higher education to retire, during a brief window, before the age of 62 without penalty if they were members of the state Employees’ Retirement System or the Teachers’ Retirement System, were at least 55 years old and had 25 years of creditable service.

The Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association challenged the law signed by Gov. David Paterson, claiming ESSAA members were illegally excluded from the early retirement incentive offered to retirement system members in bargaining units where the local union is a NYSUT affiliate.

NYSUT attorneys vigorously defended the constitutionality of the option, and the courts agreed, protecting the pension rights of those who took the option in 2010 and who saved their districts much-needed funds.

For specific information about your retirement benefits, please contact Member Services at the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System (800-348-7298) or visit the NYSTRS website at www.nystrs.org for additional retirement information.

Your retirement benefit is determined by the Retirement System’s interpretation of state pension law, and you should only rely on definitive statements made by the Retirement System as you move forward with your retirement decisions.

Local (Wayne CSD) Retirement MOA

The WTA and Wayne CSD came to an agreement on a local retirement incentive that potential members can opt into as long as they do so by April 30th, 2012. The incentive gives people who previously missed the their incentive window another one-time chance to retire with an incentive from Wayne CSD. It also temporarily lowers the current number of years worked in Wayne from 15 years to 9 years needed. In order to take the incentive you need to be at least 55, which is the minimum age required by NYTRS to retire and receive benefits. HR director Mike DeMott send a letter home over April break to people who qualify under this new incentive window as well as people who currently qualify under the original contract language. If you believe you potential qualify for this incentive, but did not receive a letter from Mike DeMott, or you have further question feel free to contact WTA President Jason Carter or HR Director Mike DeMott.
Is Level Term Life Insurance right for you?

With the cost of consumer goods such as gasoline rising at an alarming rate, we’re all trying to cut back on expenses any way that we can. Cooking at home instead of eating out? Smart (and healthier)!

Consolidating and paying off debt as quickly as possible? Great decision! “Saving” money by not purchasing life insurance? Not so good. Ask yourself this... would your family be protected if something were to happen to you?

If your answer is “no,” you may want to consider purchasing the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Level Term Life Insurance Plan – a new insurance offering available to NYSUT members and their spouses/certified domestic partners.

This plan offers life insurance in force for either a 10-, 15- or 20-year period. Your individual premium is scheduled to remain the same during the term period; you cannot be singled out for a premium increase due to your age or a change in health status; and coverage will not decrease during the term period.

Your rate for Level Term Life is based on your age at the time that you are approved for coverage. Keep in mind that the insurance company reserves the right to change rates for all insureds only once in a 12-month period.

When the term ends, you have a few options. You can renew for another term with proof of insurability, during which your benefits will remain the same. Or, you may renew directly into the Member Benefits Trust-endorsed annual renewable Term Life Insurance Plan with no medical underwriting (depending on age). You can also convert to an individual permanent life policy at a higher cost.

*For more information about this new program, please contact Marsh U.S. Consumer, a service of Seabury & Smith, Inc. – the plan administrator – toll-free at 888-386-9788. Feel free to also contact Member Benefits with any questions at 800-626-8101 or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.*

Need help getting your financial house in order?

It’s spring time... and spring cleaning time! Take advantage of this opportunity to go through your home and get rid of those items that you no longer need. And, while you’re getting your home in order, why not make sure your financial house is in order as well?

Do you have questions about how to properly invest your assets to build a college savings or retirement fund? Maybe you want to purchase or refinance a home, or simply pay off some debt?

These are important questions to ask of a professional you can trust who can put your mind at ease and help you avoid financial mistakes. The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed Financial Counseling Program – provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. – offers unbiased, objective advice customized to specific financial situations such as the ones mentioned above.

*For more details, please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.*

For information about programs 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.
Rochester Fencing Club (RFC) can come to your school!

The Summer Olympics are coming up and your students can see/participate in an Olympic Sport.

Rochester Fencing Club is owned and operated by local Olympic Fencers Felicia and Iris Zimmermann.

Option 1:
Live Demo
RFC will send coach(es) to your school to demonstrate the sport of fencing. With 20 or less students we can do an Interactive demo. Larger groups have different requirements.
Cost: Absolutely Free to you and your school!

Option 2:
Fencing PE Class
RFC will send coach(es) to your school to teach a unit of PE in Fencing. RFC's Curriculum is aligned with the NY State Physical Education Standards.
Cost: Please email Iris at Iris@rocfencing.com but don’t let cost be a hindrance, we can always work something out.

Option 3:
After School Programs
RFC will send a coach(es) to teach an after school program. We currently offer after-school programs at Harley and Alldendale Columbia.
Cost: Please email Iris at Iris@rocfencing.com but don’t let cost be a hindrance, we can always work something out.

Option 4:
Olympian Visit/Speaking Engagement
For Career Days or other speaking opportunities. Felicia (1996 and 2000) or Iris Zimmermann (2000) are available to show up to your school for motivational speaking opportunities.
Cost: We are always happy to come to speak, but if you are able, we invite you to make a donation to RAFF (Rochester Area Fencing Foundation) which gives grants to aspiring champion fencers for travel and training expenses.

For more information or to book a fencing opportunity for your students please contact:
Iris Zimmermann
Iris@rocfencing.com
585.424.0605