



THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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Unity. Dedication. Excellence.

The leadership of the Arlington Teachers' Association would like to take this opportunity to welcome you back for the 2010–2011 school year. As summer turns to fall and a new school year begins, we return to our classrooms with feelings of both continuity and change. September always brings the same routines: arranging desks, creating bulletin boards, counting textbooks. But, there are also new colleagues to welcome and, for many of you this year, new classrooms to make your own. (Even the ATA office will soon be moving to a new location.)

An additional change that you will see as you begin to get back into the routine of the school day is a new approach to communication from the ATA. With the assistance of a grant from NYSUT (see article below) we are working to unify the membership behind our goals and increase member participation in ATA sponsored events, while at the same time generating more public support for our union. A small part of

this strategy is the creation of a new slogan that encapsulates what we do every day as educators and union members: Unity, Dedication, Excellence.

Unity is at the heart of every successful union. Although a diversity of opinions and personalities is indispensable, we must remember our common objectives and strive to achieve them together.

September always brings the same routines: arranging desks, creating bulletin boards, counting textbooks. But, there are also new colleagues to welcome and, for many of you this year, new classrooms to make their own.

Dedication is an integral trait of every successful teacher and a characteristic that our members have consistently demonstrated. **Excellence** is what we, as a group of professionals, represent and what we struggle each day to instill in our students. We hope that every one of us can embody this motto in the new school year and the

years that follow.

Another small way that we hope to achieve these goals is to improve communication to our members through the use of this newsletter. Approximately every six weeks you can expect to find this publication in your mailbox at school. Our vision is for it to be comprehensive in its coverage of both local union activities and

NYSUT's statewide efforts. We also hope that it will be inclusive of new and diverse voices within the ATA.

In addition, expect to see updates to the ATA website and the creation of an email distribution list so that information

can be disseminated to members as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Although we educate children of various ages, from nine diverse towns, at twelve different schools, together we are the Arlington Teachers' Association: nearly 800 individuals united in our dedication to excellence.

ATA Seeks to Improve Community Relations Through Grant

A team from the ATA spent a week this July working with specialists in communications, public relations, and political action as part of a competitive grant program run by NYSUT. The program, the Local Action Project (LAP), focuses on improving local unions' abilities to communicate effectively with their



Donna Doerrier introduces the ATA team at the July conference, as Kate Sprague-Hicks shows her enthusiasm.

members; increasing member participation in union activities; presenting a positive image of the local to the broader community; and reliably passing school budgets.

Each year, seven locals are selected from across the state to take part in the sessions, which require a three-year commitment on the

part of the union. Each first-year local is paired with a more experienced mentor group to guide them through the process and provide ideas about how to meet their objectives. The ATA team, which consisted of Donna Doerrier (AHS), Dave Lazarus (UVMS), Laura DiStefano (AMS), Kate Sprague-Hicks (UVMS), and Robert McHugh (AHS), worked with members of the Troy Teachers' Association as their mentors. As part of LAP, NYSUT provides substantial funding assistance, as well as

See LAP on page 4

Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could win an ATA t-shirt featuring our new motto!

What law, passed in 1935, guaranteed workers in most industries the right to form a union and bargain collectively?

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to rmchugh@acsdny.org by September 17th. The winner of an ATA t-shirt will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

Political Action Update

NYSUT Endorses Candidates for November Elections

NYSUT recently announced a series of endorsements for the November elections. The endorsements, which are non-partisan, are based on the candidates' voting records on educational issues. These include charter school reform, education funding, and a property tax cap. Below are the local endorsements:

United States Senate

Charles Schumer
Kirsten Gillibrand

United States Congress

John Hall
Maurice Hinchey
Scott Murphy

New York State Comptroller

Tom DiNapoli

New York State Assembly

Kevin Cahill
Marc Molinaro

*NYSUT has declined to endorse any candidates for governor, attorney general, or state senate in our area at this time.

New York State Prevails in Race to the Top

New York State was recently awarded \$697 million as a winner in the second round of the federal Department of Education's grant program, *Race to the Top*. Nineteen finalists competed for a chunk of the \$3.4 billion in grant money. Of the ten states named winners, only Massachusetts's application scored more points than New York's.

The winners were chosen

based on a complicated rubric that included states' willingness to accept educational reforms advocated by the Obama administration. These include, among many others, uncapping the number of charter schools a state allows to operate and linking teacher compensation and tenure decisions to student test data. In an attempt to make its application more competitive, New York State passed legis-

lation addressing these two issues earlier this year.

Half of the money will be awarded directly to participating school districts and charter schools to support the implementation of reforms recommended by the new legislation, while the remaining half will be used to fund the state to enhance professional development and create a statewide student data system.

Districts Will Benefit from Education Jobs Bill Passage

In an attempt to save teaching positions across the country, Congress passed an education jobs bill in August. As a result of the legislation, New York State is scheduled to receive more than \$600 million in funding for public education. The money could save as many as 8,200 education jobs in the state that would otherwise have been lost.

All three of the local congressmen (Maurice Hinchey, Scott Murphy,

and John Hall) and New York's two senators (Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand) supported the legislation. The bill passed the House by a margin of 247-161 and the Senate 61-39. The \$26 billion measure is paid for primarily by restructuring corporate tax rates for companies that do business overseas.

Although the money has been appropriated, the method by which it will be distributed to New

York's school districts has not yet been finalized. Even though it seems unlikely that the funds will be available in time to recall teachers whose jobs were cut for the 2010-2011 school year, districts will have two years to make use of the money. In light of the current economy, this additional funding will be valuable in staving off the further job losses that are likely to be included in this year's school budget.

VOTE/COPE Contributions are Essential to Our Success

What is VOTE/COPE?

VOTE/COPE stands for Voice Of Teachers in Education and the Committee On Political Education. It is a political action fund used by NYSUT to advocate for legislation beneficial to public education and teachers.

Where does my contribution go?

40% is used locally by the ATA to support the school budget and elect pro-education members to the Board of Education.

60% is used by NYSUT to advocate at the state and federal levels for policies that benefit public education and teachers.

How does VOTE/COPE help me?

Funds are used to help members by lobbying for:

- Increased funding for education from Albany and Washington
- Fair retirement benefits for all members
- A property tax system tied to homeowners' ability to pay
- A cap on charter schools that drain funds from public education
- A fair system of teacher evaluation based on multiple measures of success
- Significant reforms to the No Child Left Behind approach to school accountability

2009 Contributions Per School

The following are the percentage of members at each school in the Arlington district who contributed to VOTE/COPE as of May 2009.

Overlook	100%
Traver Road	100%
Beekman	97%
Noxon Road	82%
West Road Intermediate	76%
Arlington High	67%
LaGrange Middle	63%
Titusville Intermediate	52%
Arthur S. May	31%
Union Vale Middle	28%
LaGrange	27%
Vail Farm	26%
Arlington Middle	22%

Overall, 56% of ATA members gave a total of \$19,655 in 2009, at an average of \$25.23 per person.

How can I contribute?

Payroll deductions can be selected by detaching and filling out the form below, or one-time contributions can be submitted by check made out to VOTE/COPE. All contributions and questions can be addressed to either Steve Hertzog or Robert McHugh, at the ATA office.

NYSUT VOTE/COPE Payroll Deduction

I _____ authorize the Arlington Central School District to deduct \$ _____
Print Name

from (1 5 10) payroll checks for the total donation of \$ _____ beginning in October for the NYSUT
Circle one

VOTE/COPE campaign. _____
Signature *Date*

This authorization is made voluntarily and without fear of reprisal and with the understanding that the making of payments to VOPE/COPE are not conditions of membership in any labor organization or of employment with the school district 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 will remain in full force and effect for all purposes while I am employed in this school district, or until revoked by me in writing between September 1st and September 15th of any given year.

Contributions or Gifts to VOTE/COPE are not tax deductible.

VOTE/COPE is the Political Action Committee of the New York State United Teachers

LAP Aids ATA



2010 —2011

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**President
Randi
Weingarten
addresses
the AFT
convention
as Bill Gates
awaits his
turn to
speak.**



Continued from Front

access to a team of public relations specialists, pollsters, and political action operatives.



Laura DiStefano poses with NYSUT Vice-President Kathleen M. Donahue at the LAP conference in July.

The ATA's LAP blueprint includes a number of new approaches to communication and member outreach. First, the ATA is debuting this newsletter, *The Educator*, to disseminate important information to its members. In this issue alone are articles that include information about teacher certification, political endorsements, contract negotiations,

and how teachers spent their summers. *The Educator* will be published every six weeks. For information that cannot wait that long, an ATA email distribution list will be implemented in order to avoid using the district's email system to send messages with union information.

Moreover, the ATA is reaching out to new members in an attempt to make them feel welcome and encouraging all members to attend more union events, including a Unity Pub Night at the Dubliner in October. (More information to follow.)

A major goal of LAP is creating a union that is not run from the top down, but that includes all members and val-

ues our diverse experiences and perspectives. To achieve that vision we must all become active participants in the Arlington Teachers' Association, helping out whenever we can. Whether that means contribut-



Members of the ATA's LAP team parley with their mentor group, the Troy Teachers Association, in Saratoga.

ing an idea for *The Educator*, lending a hand to help with the holiday party, or making phone calls in support of the budget, we all must do our part for the ATA to continue to thrive.

Delegates Attend AFT Convention in Seattle

The 2010 American Federation of Teachers (AFT) convention was held this year in beautiful Seattle, Washington. Delegates representing the ATA included Ed Hotaling, Kathie Blank-Cicala, Donna Doerrier and Steve Hertzog.

Seattle was ready for the more than 3,000 educators and health professionals from across the country to spend five days at the 81st AFT convention. This year's theme,

"Building Futures Together" set the stage for the many presentations on topics such

as organizing, working with communities, political action and strengthening the work place. Resolutions dealing with issues such as teacher evaluation, staffing in higher education, healthcare reform and common core standards were debated.

Randi Weingarten, president of the AFT, presided over the convention and introduced speakers such as Juan Andrade Jr., president of the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, NAACP president Ben Jealous and AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka.

Gates explained that his foundation is currently working on two projects aimed at fostering effective teaching in public schools. The first project utilizes 3,000 teachers in six school districts who voluntarily assess their teaching

through new video-based technology. "The new video technology can help identify and transfer best practices," Gates said. The second initiative extends the first project's work. It aims "to make teacher effectiveness the center of the whole system," Gates explained. This would lead to measures of excellent teaching that can guide the way schools recruit, evaluate, develop, assign, compensate and promote teachers.

Gates' appearance was not without controversy. A dozen or so delegates walked out before he spoke. They expressed dissatisfaction with Gates' injection of private business into public education. Weingarten defended the decision to invite Gates and pointed out that change is coming to teacher evaluation. Her feeling is that we should be a part of that change.

—Submitted by Donna Doerrier

Changes to Certification Have Arrived

The New York State Board of Regents recently adopted changes to the Commissioner's regulations permitting teacher certification flexibility to avoid or mitigate reductions in force. Certain general education and students with disabilities teachers may be reassigned to teach in grades close to their current certification area for up to two years. Such reassignment will require a "Limited Extension" to a base certificate.

Limited certificate extensions will be granted to currently employed experienced and qualified teachers that have a Superintendent's statement attesting:

1. The district is in an immediate fiscal crisis and the issuance of the extension will avoid or mitigate a reduction in force
2. The teacher is Highly Qualified under NCLB
3. The district will provide appropriate support to the teacher, and has verified that the teacher is enrolled in study at an institution of higher education to complete the requirements for the full extension.

These Limited Extensions are not renewable and their availability will expire June 30, 2013.

A teacher certified in:

1. 1-6 Childhood Education (general education or SWD) with a Kindergarten Limited Extension could be reassigned to teach kindergarten for a two-year period.

Eligible Certificates	Available Limited Extension	Requirements for Full Extension
Prek-6 or 1-6	Kindergarten	6 Semester Hours - Early Childhood Education
Prek-6 or 1-6	Grades 7-8, Academic Subject	Academic Subject CST; and 6 Semester Hours - Middle Childhood Education
Students with Disabilities (SWD) 1-6	Students with Disabilities Kindergarten	6 Semester Hours - Early Childhood Education
Students with Disabilities 1-6	Students with Disabilities Grades 7-8	Academic Subject CST; and 6 Semester Hours - Middle Childhood Education
Grades 7-12 Academic Subject	Grades 5-6 Academic Subject	6 Semester Hours - Middle Childhood Education

2. 1-6 Childhood Education (general education or SWD) with a Grades 7-8 Limited Extension could be reassigned to teach Grades 7 or 8 (not for high school credit) for a two-year period.
3. 7-12 Academic Subject Area (general education only) with a Grades 5-6 Limited Extension could be reassigned to teach an academic subject in grades 5 or 6 for a two-year period.

Although coursework and/or content

specialty tests (CSTs) are not needed prior to issuance of the Limited Extension, applicants must be enrolled in a program to complete coursework and, if required, pass the CST before the limited extension expires.

At the end of the Limited Extension two-year validity period the teacher must be eligible for the full extension in order to maintain the reassignment. Limited extensions are offered by the State Education Department to mitigate a reduction in force but districts are not required to use this flexibility.

If a preferred eligibility list

(PEL) exists that covers the tenure area where the district is seeking to fill a position, the district must use the PEL first before making any new appointments to that tenure area.

If you have any questions regarding certification in general, submit them to *The Educator* at sfalk@acsdkny.org and we will answer them in upcoming issues.

Negotiations Update:

"Currently, the team and I are in the beginning stages of negotiations, which will include meeting with the district this month. Our commitment to our membership is, as always, to bring forth a fair and equitable contract. We are very sensitive to the current economic situation and are willing to work with the district in a mutually beneficial manner."

— Donna Doerrier

Spotlight on the Contract

Each issue of The Educator will spotlight a particular part of our contract in an effort to make our members more familiar with their rights and the terms and conditions of their employment. If you have a section you would like to see featured, email rmchugh@acsdkny.org.

"Upon written application, including supporting documentation that an adoption is imminent, a leave for the purpose of adopting a child shall be granted for a period not to exceed four (4) calendar weeks for a domestic adoption and six (6) calendar weeks for an international adoption. The required number of leave days will be transferred from the unit member's personal sick leave accrual to his or her personal leave day accrual and then taken as personal leave. This clause shall apply to only one of the adopting parents should both parents be employed by the Arlington Central School District. The adopting unit member shall not be permitted to access the ATA Sick Leave Bank for the purpose of converting sick days to personal leave days."

Explanation: This relatively new provision (Article XVI G, page 30) guarantees members wishing to adopt a child access to their own sick time in order to acclimate the adopted child to their home. Members are entitled to four weeks of paid sick time for a domestic adoption and six weeks (the same period allowed for a live birth) for an international adoption.

How Teachers Spent The Summer

Sarah Stern, AHS



Sarah Stern (center) poses with some friends in local garb.

In my wildest dreams I never thought I would be rooting for Germany to win anything, especially not the World Cup. But on June 27th, I was at a beer garden in Stuttgart cheering just as loudly as the locals for the home team. When Germany beat England 4-1 in that game I went out into the streets with the rest of my study tour participants to continue the celebration. My enthusiasm for the German soccer team never wavered and I was devastated when they lost to Spain.

Everything I had learned about Germany came from my New York State public school education, my Jewish

upbringing and Hollywood box-office films like *Schindler's List*. After spending two weeks on The Goethe Institut study tour of Germany, I now realize it was a lopsided view of the country and its people. The New York State curriculum tends to focus on Germany as an aggressor and a failed state. It emphasizes Germany's role as an instigator in WWI and WWII. There is little mention of the vital role Germany plays today as a model democracy and the biggest European Union economy. The Goethe Institut offered me the chance to explore the new Germany through a tour geared toward history teachers. I came away from the trip absolutely in love with the country and its people.

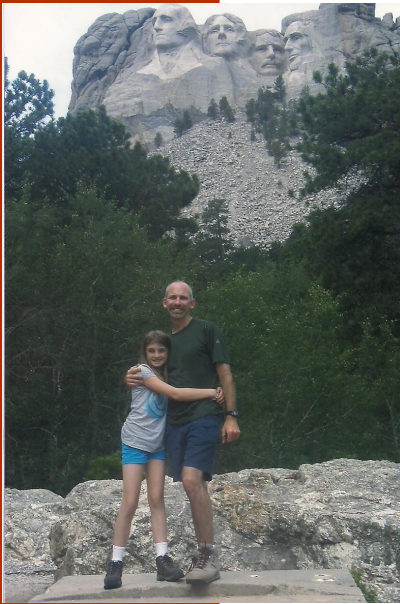
Some highlights of the trip included the Mercedes-Benz museum; an exhibition of artwork that had been

auctioned off by the Nazis; a German high school where we met with teachers and teachers-in-training; the Buchenwald Concentration Camp; the medieval school where Martin Luther studied; and the chilling Stasi headquarters.

My favorite memory of our final stop, Berlin, however, is not of a museum or tour, it is of me and my study participants picnicking on the lawn of the Reichstag among the locals on one of our last nights in Germany. The food was fabulous, the beer was great (of course), and the company was wonderful, but more than anything I remember feeling this great sense of belonging. I don't often have that when I travel in a foreign country and I never expected to feel that way in Germany.

There is a good chance I will be rooting for Germany again in 2014.

Jason Venier, Vail Farm



Jason Venier and his daughter, Olivia, rush to see more parks this sum-

My ten year old daughter, Olivia, and I took an adventurous tent camping trip to some of the north central national parks this summer. We visited ten breathtaking monuments and parks in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Colorado, and Utah. While all were beautiful, Yellowstone is still unmatched in its grandeur and diversity. However, each park had its own unique features from a variety of wildlife (bison, black and grizzly bears, coyotes, pronghorn antelope, moose, and elk), to incredible geography, and amazing history. We had the opportunity to horseback ride, whitewater raft, and explore the second and fourth largest cave systems in the world. At each park and monument, Olivia was

able to participate in the fun and educational Junior Ranger Program. Our country has so much to offer, and we hope to explore new national parks next year.

Marc Hawes, AHS

This summer I worked with a semi-regional theater called TriArts. It is located in Sharon, Connecticut and was actually founded by Sarah Combs, our resident theater teacher here at Arlington High School. The production actually started with auditions back in early February, but rehearsal did not start until July. I was involved with *Oklahoma!* one of Rogers and Hammerstein's great musicals. This was my second season with TriArts. Last summer I played Marcellus Washburn in *The Music Man*. This summer I played a character called Slim. I was primarily an ensemble member but truly a show like *Oklahoma!* is made by the ensemble. I worked with many talented actors, most of whom had college degrees in theater. It was very nice to be surrounded by people who truly want to make it their living. There was a great sense of professionalism throughout the whole experience. The end of the show was somewhat bittersweet. On one hand, having five to seven shows per week can get very tiring, so when the end comes it's a nice break. But after spending six weeks with those people we became a very tight-knit family and it was hard to say goodbye. It almost feels like I did not have a summer at all, but I love what I do and if I didn't do it my summer would have been very boring indeed!

News From the Public Relations Committee

The ATA Public Relations Committee will soon be back in action and working to continue our work in the community. Our first major fundraising effort of the year will be the March of Dimes Blue Jeans for Babies campaign, which will take place in November. The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We are hopeful that our membership will, once again, consider supporting this important cause by donating and show their support by wearing blue jeans and either a T-shirt or pin on Tuesday, November 23rd. More information will be forthcoming in the month of October, but feel free to contact your building PR Representative should you have any questions.



The 2010 pin and T-shirt design for Blue Jeans for Babies. The long-sleeved t-shirts will be gray.

Congratulations to Recently Tenured ATA Members

The following ATA members were awarded tenure by the Board of Education this year.

Elementary		Middle	High
<u>ASM</u>	<u>Traver</u>	<u>AMS</u>	Kristen Bennett Aimee Bodron Freya Bomba Michelle Chastain Danielle Collica Sarah Combs Richard Dima Amy Downes Thomas Harris Diana Interrante Mary Beth Neils Aimee Nyarady Jeanette Sotland Gretchen Strouth John Timm
Tara Gilliard Juliet Menasche	Katherine Chromanski	Laura DiStefano Tina Mott Heather Riley Christopher Slattery	
<u>Beekman</u>	<u>TIS</u>	<u>LMS</u>	
Allison Doughty Erin Ginsberg	Anthony Stewart	Caroline Cave Nicole Hernon Meghan McCormack Christopher Quaranto	
<u>LES</u>	<u>West Road</u>	<u>UVMS</u>	
Meghan Dorsey	Michele Timperio	Sheri Altieri Sara LaCelle Mariann Markard Matthew Reilly	
<u>Overlook</u>	<u>Vail Farm</u>		
Christine LaValle	Rachel Hubbard Pamela Ivers Andrew Stock		

Coming Next Month... Profiles of new teachers

Dates to Remember



SEPTEMBER

14th—Flex Benefits Plan Meetings, 3 and 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., AHS

21st—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

24th—Welcome Back Social, 3:30 p.m., The Dubliner

Mentors, new teachers, senior building representatives, and newly tenured teachers are invited to celebrate the new school year with free appetizers and drink specials

28th—Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., UVMS

OCTOBER

1st—Deadline to submit information for graduate or inservice credit

1st—Deadline for using 2009—2010 Welfare Trust benefits

8th—Deadline for voter registration forms to be postmarked for the November 2nd general election


19th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

12th—Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., AHS

26th—Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., LMS

29th—Unity Pub, 3:30 p.m., The Dubliner

All ATA members are invited to meet members of our LAP mentor union, the Troy Teachers' Association, for free appetizers and drink specials



Announcements



Help Wanted!

The Educator needs you. We are looking for all ATA members interested in writing or photography to contribute to the newsletter. We would also like representatives from all of the schools in the district to aid us in gathering information to print.

Please contact Sam Falk at sfalk@acsdny.org if you are interested.

National Board Certification Support Group Now Forming

If you have taught for at least three years and are interested in becoming National Board certified, contact Colleen Napora or Stephanie Rice for details. Financial incentives are offered by the district!

Do you have an announcement to share?

The Educator welcomes all submissions from ATA members. Email announcements, photographs or article ideas to Sam Falk at sfalk@acsdny.org or mail them to her care of the ATA office., Freedom Executive Park Suite 102, 48 Freedom Plains Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603