



THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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Members Receive National Board Certification

Like many other professionals, such as doctors and accountants, teachers can also receive a national certification. While this is not required by New York State, many of Arlington's educators opt to go through the rigorous process.

Arlington is ranked third in the state in the number of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teachers, with 31 out of the approximately 700 teachers in the district having achieved the distinction. This year six new Arlington teachers (see box) received NBPTS certification.

The top two districts in the state as of this year for NBPTS certified teachers were Schenectady and Rochester, tied with 39 each. While Schenectady has approximately the same number of students as Arlington, Rochester is about four times larger. Moreover, Arlington's percentage of NBPTS certified teachers is 10 times the New York State average.

The NBPTS was set up in 1987. It identifies five core standards, such as knowing the subject matter and being responsible for managing stu-

dents' learning, but its biggest emphasis is on self-reflection. Because the certification process entails that the teacher analyze lessons and gain feedback about teaching practices it has been shown that the process itself often improves teaching. While the actual certification is the goal, the activities leading up to it may be just as valuable.

More teachers at Arlington should certainly be able to become NBPTS certified teachers; it's just a matter of going through the lengthy documentation process."

Because NBPTS certification is highly regarded, Arlington offers its teachers support throughout the process and a financial incentive upon successful completion. Hertzog and others strongly recommend having a partner or team to work with in order to keep motivated and help with tasks like proof-reading. The district provides this in the form of support classes led by two of Arlington's NTBPTS certified teachers, Colleen Napora (AHS) and Stephanie Rice (AHS). Anyone thinking of pursuing certification should contact Colleen or Stephanie.

If the lure of collaboration with other driven colleagues and the opportunity to hone and improve one's teaching skills aren't enough, the district also offers a monetary incentive to achieve NBPTS certification: \$3000 a year for each of the 10 years that the certification is valid.

2010 National Board Certification Recipients:

Theresa Acosta — UVMS

Gina Coelho — BES/VF

Mindy Grey — Traver

Beth Plotsky — TIS

Jayne Stofko — LMS

Gretchen Strouth — AHS

The NBPTS certification process can take hundreds of hours and requires tasks like essay-writing and video-taping. But according to NBPTS certified teacher Steve Hertzog (AHS), "...many of us actually meet and exceed the NBPTS standards.

West Road School Commemorates its 1970 Opening

November 23, 2010 marked the 40th anniversary of the opening of West Road Intermediate School. The day was celebrated by the school's students and faculty as they dressed in fashions from the era that ushered in the school, the 1970s. Bell bottoms, fringe vests, psychedelic colors and patterns and wild hairdos abounded. Many staff members contributed pic-



JDWR teachers embody the spirit of the 1970s in celebration of the decade that their school opened.

ture and other items from the decade. These were showcased in the school's lobby display

window.

The highlight of the day was the assembly prepared for the students by the staff. Starting the show was the West Road 5th grade Drill Team dancing to arrangements of music from the 1970s by artists such as the Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder, and Abba.

Following this was the opening of the time capsule that had been created

See JDWR on page 5

Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could win an ATA Polo shirt !

What is the largest labor union in the country?

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the two correct responses received, was **Cindy Binnie** from AHS. She correctly identified **Dick Ianzuzi** as the president of NY-SUT. Cindy is now the proud owner of an ATA polo shirt. Answer this month's question and you could win a polo shirt too!

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to rmchugh@acsdny.org by January 7th. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.



As 2010 comes to a close, and we settle in to enjoy the holiday season, there are many issues that face the ATA in the coming year. We have weathered a storm of "difficult budgets" for the last 2 years in a row, and this year is shaping up to be worse than the last. At present, Superintendent Geoffrey Hicks has begun the budget process with informational meetings to outline the challenges that lie ahead. It is no secret that New York State is in debt, and there is discussion already of cuts in state aid for next year. In previous years, Arlington has absorbed cuts, but they have been partially offset by an increase in federal stimulus money.

Arlington is again facing a loss of state aid in the coming year, and that federal stimulus money is set to run out. There has even been talk that the state may cut aid in the middle of this year, but that remains to be seen as Andrew Cuomo is set to take office in January. In a show of good will, Mr. Hicks has

expressed that if Arlington faces a mid-year loss of aid, he would not cut programs, nor lay people off mid year. With that said, preparing the next year's budget will be interesting to say the least.

In the Superintendent's first budget meeting, he outlined a \$16 million shortfall in next year's budget. This is due to the projected loss of federal stimulus money, a projected loss of state aid, an increase in Teachers Retirement System (TRS) contributions, and contractual obligations such as health care and step increases. To begin with, much of the "shortfall" is just a projection, but there are some hard facts we need to address.

As many of us can see in our schools, we have been facing a declining enrollment. A large wave of student population has now moved through the district. The largest cohorts of students are in the high school, with smaller numbers in the lower grades. For example, while the 9th, 10th and 11th grade classes are 910, 808, and 831 students, respectively, our elementary cohorts are 644 in 1st grade,

677 in 2nd grade, and 671 in 3rd grade. These numbers show a sharp decline in the student population. The middle school cohorts land in between.

These numbers of declining enrollment coupled with the dramatic budget losses that we face could provide for great changes. I do not want to inflame fears, but it is important that we are all aware of the facts. There is a potential for more layoffs. The ATA leadership is following these developing events closely. I would encourage all members to keep close tabs on this. I invite you to the upcoming school board meetings and further budget meetings to stay informed. Much of what makes Arlington great could be at risk.

We, the ATA, understand that this is not the best news in time for the holidays, but we want to keep the membership informed as the information is made available. We stand ready to participate in this process, and work to support our members. We wish you the best during the holiday season.

—Bob Maier, ATA President

Contract Grievance on Child Rearing is Settled

"Upon written application a child rearing leave without pay shall be granted for a period not to exceed two years. Such leave may be extended by the District upon request. Teachers requesting such leave shall give reasonable notice (90 days) to the District prior to the commencement of such leave. This notice shall include tentative commencement and termination of leave dates. Returns from such leaves shall coincide with the beginning of a semester."

Quoted above is Article XVII, Section C, Clause 1 of the ATA contract, which pertains to child rearing leave. Our members have always enjoyed the benefit of up to two years of leave to spend raising their children. Last year the District attempted to change the interpretation and

application of the above language, focusing on the phrase "Such leave **may** be extended by the District upon request." Furthermore, the District argued that highly trained teachers and pro-

In essence, this decision made the extension of child rearing leave for a second year, when the required 90 days notice is given, an iron-clad contractual benefit that our members will enjoy for years to come.

professionals are difficult to replace and extension of these leaves diminishes the quality of education provided our student population. Based on this logic, the District denied several of our members an extension of their leaves for a second year.

The Association immediately

filed a grievance on this violation and managed to secure an extension for each of these leaves so that not one of our members was affected by this dispute. We are pleased and proud to announce that last month the arbitrator found in our favor, citing over twenty five years of past practice. In essence, this decision made the extension of child rearing leave for a second year, when the required 90 days notice is given, an iron-clad contractual benefit that our members will enjoy for years to come.

The ATA would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Kathy Schwartz, our NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, who prepared our case and presented our argument to the arbitrator.

—Greg Nieman, ATA First Vice-President

Political Action: Tax Cap Threatens Public Education

NYSUT declined to endorse a candidate in last month's gubernatorial election in large part due to Andrew Cuomo's outspoken support for a property tax cap. According to now Governor-elect Cuomo's plan, local property taxes, the lion's share of which fund public education, would be capped at 2% growth each year. If inflation were under that 2% figure, the tax cap would be even lower. Districts would have the option of putting a budget with a larger tax increase up for a vote by the community, but a supermajority, 60%, would be required for approval. According to several sources cited by *The New York Times* in a recent article ("Cuomo Plans to Push for a Cap on Property Taxes". December 13), Cuomo intends to make a tax cap one of his legislative priorities.

A tax cap similar to the one Cuomo

is proposing would be devastating to Arlington. As a district that receives the vast majority of its funding from local property tax revenue, not from the state or federal government, Arlington would be disproportionately hurt by a cap. Over the

jobs and the elimination of many programs essential to the success of our district.

Over the past two years outgoing Governor Paterson has proposed a tax cap similar to, but less severe than, Governor-elect Cuomo's. The State Senate has passed a tax cap bill several times in recent sessions. Thanks to the efforts of the Democratic majority in the Assembly, however, these bills have failed to become law. It is not clear whether, with a new, wildly popular governor championing the change, the Assembly can continue its stalwart opposition. Therefore, we need to act. Please write, call, or email your State Senators and Assembly members (see box for information) and demand that they oppose Governor-elect Cuomo's proposal. This new tax cap must be defeated before it gains momentum and it's too late for this district.

Contact Your Legislators

<p><i>Joel Miller</i> L. O. B. 437 Albany, NY 12248 (518) 455-5725</p>	<p><i>Steve Saland</i> 617 L. O. B. Albany, NY 12247 (518) 455-2411</p>	<p><i>Marc Molinaro</i> L. O. B. 532 Albany, NY 12248 (518) 455-5177</p>
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past two years, even with tax increases well beyond the 2% proposal, the district has been forced to cut important programs, reduce staffing levels, and close a school. If a cap is enacted by this May, and the district's potential for raising funds is severely limited, it will unequivocally mean the loss of dozens of teaching

Spotlight on the Contract: Short Term Leave

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@acsdny.org.

"Teachers shall be entitled to the following temporary leaves of absence with pay each school year:

1. One (1) day for religious reasons which require absence during school hours.
2. Two (2) days for the purpose of visiting other schools with the permission of the principals of the schools involved.
3. Time necessary for appearance in any legal proceeding connected with the teacher's employment or with the school system, except for suit of teacher or teachers against the District.
4. Absence because of quarantine or childhood communicable disease traceable to contact made in school.
5. In addition to statutory benefits, a maximum of ten (10) days per school year for persons called into temporary active duty with any unit of the United States Military Reserves or the National Guard, provided such obligations cannot be fulfilled on days when school is not in session, less benefits received for such service."

Explanation: According to this provision of the ATA contract (Article XVIIA, page 23), teachers are entitled to several forms of paid short term leave beyond the use of their sick days and personal days.

Each teacher can be absent from school for religious reasons one day per year. Typically this has involved the celebration of religious holidays (Yom Kippur, Eid al-Fitr) on days when school is in session.

Teachers have the right to two days per year to observe and collaborate with teachers in other schools. This is dependent on the permission of the schools' principals.

If a teacher is required to stay home because of a doctor prescribed quarantine as a result of a contagious disease acquired at school, he or she may be entitled to a paid short term leave and not have to use sick days. The recent H1N1 epidemic was an example of the type of circumstances that would warrant this.

Teachers are also entitled to paid short term leaves of absence in the event of military service and required testimony in district legal cases.

2010—2011 ATA Officers

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TIS — Jen Spagnola

AMS — Greg Fredricks

LMS — Patty Bauerline

UVMS — Dave Lazarus

AHS — Steve Hertzog

AHS — Noreen Mills-Martin

CAO — Sue Lesser

What's Going On?

"What's Going On" is a new feature debuting in *The Educator* this month. It highlights noteworthy accomplishments by ATA members. Do you know of a colleague who deserves recognition? Let *The Educator* know by emailing sfalk@acsdny.org. We can't know what's going on at all of your schools without your help!

Congratulations to the following ATA members for their contributions to the Arlington community and beyond.

Andrew Arenson - LMS

Mr. Arenson has spent many years coordinating the effort to install a veterans' memorial at the high school, including a special tribute to Arlington graduate and Korean War hero Charlie Johnson.

A dedication ceremony was held recently.

Laurie Bryant - LMS

War of the World was written by Ms. Bryant for the students at LMS to perform as the fall drama. There were about 40 students who participated in the show and it was very well received. Ms. Bryant is the director of the LMS fall drama and the spring musical.

Kathryn Paulsen - LMS

Ms. Paulsen was recently named the Art Teacher of the Year by the New York State Art Teachers Region 7 Middle School division.

Stephen Papp - LMS

Mr. Papp recently participated in a production of a female ver-

sion of *The Odd Couple* for a local community theater.

Janice Rifenburg - Beekman

Ms. Rifenburg started a building-wide collection for UNICEF this year.

Jennifer McMorris - Beekman

Ms. McMorris has been leading a building-wide effort to write letters to U.S. troops for the past 6 years.

Jacob Lawrence, Maribel Pregnall, and James Lillis - AHS

Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Lillis, and Mrs. Pregnall have been instrumental in the campaign to install solar panels on the roof of the high school. After many years of waiting, the panels are being installed this month.

Give the Gift of Labor History this Holiday Season

Over the past few years there have been a number of terrific additions to the library of works on the history of the labor movement. Here is a sampling of several of them that tell the stories of fellow unionists who helped lay the foundation of the modern labor movement.

Philip Dray's exhaustive **There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America** (772 pages. Doubleday, 2010.) recounts the story of the labor movement from its origins in the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, through the rise of iconic powerhouse unions, like the AFL and the UAW, to the present weakened state of the organized labor movement in America. The book's title is taken from an old labor ballad, quoted in the epigraph, which includes the lines, "There is pow'r, there is pow'r/In a band of workingmen/When they stand hand in hand."

Tough Liberal: Albert Shanker and the Battle Over Schools, Unions, Race, and Democracy (524 pages. Columbia Press, 2007.) by Richard Kahlenberg focuses on the emergence of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City in the

1960s and 1970s. The book describes Skanker's often controversial leadership in the fight to give teachers a voice in an educational system that had traditionally ignored their concerns.

Three other books address landmark events in labor history. **Death in the Haymarket: A Story**

of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America (383 pages. Pantheon, 2006.) by James Green relates the tale of the Haymarket Riot of 1886, one of the bloodiest and most consequential days in the history of organized labor. **Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West** (266 pages. Rutgers University Press,

2008) by Scott Martelle explores the struggles of unionized coal miners in Colorado in the early 20th century against a group of mining magnates led by John D. Rockefeller Jr. **Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream** (337 pages. Penguin, 2005) by Bruce Watson details the events surrounding one of the most famous, and successful, strikes of the 20th century, at the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile mills in 1912.

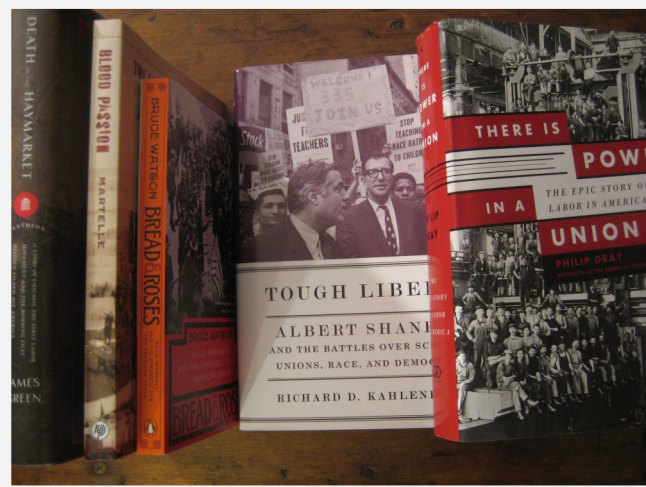


Photo by Robert McHugh

News From the Public Relations Committee

Annual Blue Jeans for Babies Fundraiser was a success

This year over \$6,000 was raised during the annual Blue Jeans for Babies fundraiser, held on November 23, 2010. This was the largest amount collected at Arlington since 2007. Thank you to all who contributed.

1st Annual Jackie Higgins Memorial SPCA Drive Coming in January

For those of you who do not know, the ATA lost a wonderful individual and a life-long supporter this past year. Jackie Higgins had been the ATA's secretary for many years, but she was so much more than that to anyone who knew her. Jackie was an ever-positive person who made the ATA office feel like a home. Visitors were welcomed and greeted as though walking through a family member's door. Even hearing Jackie's voice on the phone was enough to warm many callers' hearts. Even though she was not an ATA member, Jackie dedicated her life to our organization's cause and its membership. She will be dearly missed.

This year we are beginning the Jackie Higgins Memorial SPCA drive. We hope it will become an annual event that will help us remember Jackie by supporting a cause she held dear. Jackie loved animals, so starting in January we will be collecting donations for the Dutchess County SPCA. Because running their organization takes much more than some cans of cat food, the DCSPCA has provided a list of items they can use. They also always appreciate monetary donations. If you choose to give money, please make your

check out to the DCSPCA.

Please look for donation boxes in your school's mail-rooms by the middle of January. You can also give donations directly to your ATA Public Relations Committee member, or drop them off at the ATA office. The collections will run from January through early February.

Thank you for your support of this great cause, the SPCA, and your remembrance of this wonderful individual, Jackie Higgins.

—John Filor, Chair of the Annual Jackie Higgins Memorial SPCA Drive

SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR DONATION TO THE SPCA:

- Canned cat and dog food
- Cake-sized paper plates
- Non-clumping kitty litter
- Clean, dry towels and blankets
- Long handled scrub brushes
- Scrubbies
- Garbage bags: heavy duty 60 gallon size
- Paper towels
- Bleach
- Laundry detergent
- Hoses and hose nozzles
- Legal-sized envelopes
- Postage stamps
- Copy paper

JDWR Celebrates its Anniversary in Style

Continued from Front

on the 20th anniversary of the school in 1990.

The contents revealed by JDWR principal Heather Ogborn to the curious audience included items such as a copy of *TV Guide* magazine with students' favorite shows underlined, a school cafeteria menu, and a cassette tape with students from 1990 saying hello to future students.

The most interesting item was a November 1990 copy of the *Poughkeepsie Journal* with a headline stating that Governor-elect Mario Cuomo was planning to cut state aid to education by millions of dollars. This eerily mirrors current newspaper headlines saying that Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo is planning to do the same thing.

The remainder of the assembly compared life in the 1970s to current trends. A narrator informed students about stereo

sets, 8-track and cassette tapes, getting up to change the television channel, and many more bygone parts of our culture. Staff

members dressed as beloved tv characters from that period paraded across the stage with objects from the 1970s as the students cheered enthusiastically. Appearances of the Partridge Family, the Brady Bunch, and Archie and Edith Bunker made for quite a festive program.

The day was devoted to celebrating the spirit of the school currently known as the Joseph D'Aquanni West Road Intermediate School.

In addition to the anniversary will be marked by the creation of a new time capsule for future generations to open. Classes will be creating projects to fill the new capsule with in the spring.

—Lorelei Hauptmann and Betsy Marshall



JDWR physical education teacher Tim Murphy models some early 90's apparel and accessories at an assembly commemorating the school's 40th anniversary.

Update From Our NY State Teachers' Retirement System Delegate

The New York State Teachers' Retirement System Delegates meeting was held recently in Saratoga. While there I attended several very informative workshops and want to share some information. By now you should have all received your "Profile" from NYSTRS. Also the NYSTRS has updated its website. There is an amazing amount of information on it. You can visit it at www.nystrs.org. By signing up for an account you can access all of your information and find out what services are available to you. You can sign up for an individual consultation or sign up for a PREP seminar (Pension & Retirement Education Program.) They are urging new members to start thinking ahead- it is NOT too early to set up a TSA account and start planning for your retirement. The NYSTRS assured us that your pension is safe and will be there for you when you retire. More information is available on their website or by calling (800) 648-7298.

—Siouxzanne Harris

ATA Holiday Party 2010



Photos by Siouxzanne Harris



These photos and many more can be found on the ATA's website at www.arlingtonteachers.com.



Dates to Remember

DECEMBER

14th—Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., OPS

23rd—Winter Recess Begins

JANUARY

3rd— Winter Recess Ends

11th—Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., ASM

17th—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — No School

18th—ATA Executive Council Session, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

18th—Initial BOE Budget Study Session

25th—Board of Education Meeting, 7:30 p.m., JDWR

25-28th— Regents Week



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.

The staff of
The Educator would
like to wish all ATA
members a happy and
healthy
holiday season.

VOTE/COPE Drive in Full Swing!

The 2010-2011 VOTE/COPE drive has begun all schools. Contributions can be given to the PAC member at your building or sent to Steve Hertzog at the ATA office.

Correction: Last issue's article on the One Nation Rally should have stated that the American Federation of Teachers, not the United Federation of Teachers, had members in attendance from all 50 states.