



THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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Challenges Lie Ahead

ATA President Bob Maier's 2014 State of the Union Address

Each year we hope that there will be a break in the level of challenges that we face, and this year is no different than the past. The ATA is securely positioned to address these times, but our profession is changing before our eyes. Many parts of our craft that we once enjoyed are now being sacrificed

to conform to national and state standards in the name of "improving" education. Most could agree that our profession is an ever-evolving one that must meet the needs of today's children. I don't believe anyone would ar-

gue against that. The problem is that we are being forced to change in the name of something without any substance of

combat the legal requirements of what the state is demanding. What I speak of is none other than the Common Core Curriculum.

It is not that we are not happy to accommodate new state and national standards, but the timeline of implementation and the support the state is providing in training and resources is completely dis-

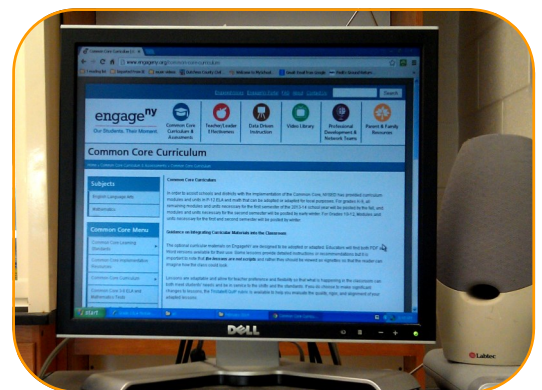
appointing, to say the least. As a district, Arlington is doing its best to keep up with the changes, and we are better positioned than most. This is not to say that we are in the clear - there is a

See 2014 on page 7

Please reach out to us if you have something you wish to share about the happenings in our district, or the State Education Department. The time is now that we all need to be more proactive in protecting the future of our profession.

support from our state.

It has been clear since the beginning that Commissioner King has been pushing full speed ahead without any plan of support. As districts around the state push back, there is not any real footing to



ARLINGTON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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Political Action Update: Board Resolution

Trivia Challenge

Answer the question below correctly and you could be the proud winner of ATA gear!

How many teachers in NY earned National Board Certification this year?

Last month's winners, selected at random from among the correct responses received, were **Erica Dunn** from ASM and **Regina Godfrey** from AHS. They correctly identified **1932** as the year the AMS building was constructed. They are now the proud owners of a ATA gear.

Answer this month's question and you could win ATA gear too!

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to rmchugh@acsdny.org by February 21st. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

The Arlington School Board's Legislative Advocacy committee developed a proposal for a resolution and presented it during the school board meeting on January 14, 2014. Their proposal addresses issues in education that have become increasingly controversial over the past few years.

Those issues include; high stakes standardized testing, Common Core State Standards, Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) for teachers and principals, and the sharing of sensitive student information without parental consent. The members on the Legislative Advocacy committee include board members Kelly Lappan, Jennifer Eraca and James Shuttleworth, along with other Arlington employees.

The committee's stated purpose according to Lappan, who read the proposal at the meeting, was to come up with a viable statement of

beliefs about how we educate our children and manage our community schools. Many of the points outlined in the proposal specifically speak to the issue of maintaining local control of our schools. Here are some examples from the proposal:

Under the heading *Common Core State Standards*

In the coming weeks the proposed resolution will be presented at various PTSA meetings and a request for feedback will be made from the larger community.

one of the points presented was:

- We specifically reserve the right to create our own curriculum to meet overarching Common Core Standards and reserve the right to differentiate instruction based upon individual student's needs.

Under the heading *Standardized Tests:*

- Standardized assessments for students with disabilities should be given at the individual student's present level

of performance rather than the student's grade level.

- Students should undergo the minimum amount of testing needed to determine their progress. The length of each assessment should be age and developmentally appropriate.

Under the heading *Annual Professional Performance Review:*

- A 100 point scale is an arbitrary measure of teacher and principal performance. If there is no benefit or additional information derived by force feeding evaluation results into a 100 point scale to promote student achievement, or if there are additional costs with no corresponding benefits to students, then the scale is not appropriate and should not be used.

In closing, the proposal calls for community support and participation in advocating for changes to current education law at the state and federal level: "Therefore

See PAC on page 6



Photo courtesy of Greg Nieman

Legislative Luncheon

On February 1st ATA Community Action Chair Robert McHugh (left) and First Vice President Greg Nieman (right) attended NYSUT's annual Legislative Luncheon in Kingston. At the event they were able to talk directly with state legislators about issues that are of importance to educators, such as that of school funding. Pictured with them is State Assemblywoman Didi Barrett and her Community Liaison Tyrone Stevens. Stevens is a 2006 Arlington graduate.

ATA Contract Contains Many Benefits

With contract negotiations beginning anew, now is the time to submit proposals to the ATA's negotiation team. The following personal account is just one example of how specific provisions of the ATA contract can make a difference in the lives of our members. Prior to 2008 there was no paid leave given for adoption. Once a proposal was made for it, obtaining paid leave was negotiated in to the next contract.

My daughters Lia and Rosalie are both adopted from China. Lia was adopted in July 2010 as a 10 month old, and Rosalie was adopted in June 2013, as a 3 1/2 year old. Lia and Rosalie are just 3 months apart in age, so it's like having twins sometimes. They both have very different personalities but are bonding and becoming close as sisters. Watching them grow is so much fun. Rosalie is still learning to speak English so we do have moments of wondering what she is saying.

It was a great experience to travel to China both times. We were able to tour Beijing, Nanchang

(Lia's location), Shanghai (Rosalie's location), and Guangzhou (U.S. Consulate location). We found the Chinese people very friendly, encouraging and curious to our adoption process. Although seeing China was memorable, it all fades away when you think about the first time you meet your child. It's been an amazing experience and has opened up our minds and hearts as we learned about another culture and became parents.

I'm forever grateful for how supportive the ATA and the district were through both adoptions. ATA President Bob Maier once told me as we discussed the adoption process, "Don't worry about that. You've got enough on your plate." (He knew that international adoptions had a ton of paperwork!)



Photo courtesy of Amy Markland

VF kindergarten teacher Amy Markland was able to travel to China to adopt both of her daughters by taking advantage of the paid leave provision of the ATA's contract.

Working with our adoption agencies, the U.S. and Chinese Governments and each of our Chinese guides our dreams came true of becoming parents to two wonderful little girls.

-Amy Markland, VFE

Spotlight on the Contract: Adoption Leave

Each issue of The Educator spotlights 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 sfalk@acsdny.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 provision (Article XVI, page 24) allows for adoptive parents to take a paid leave of absence similar to that granted for maternity leave, with the exception of not being allowed to access the ATA's Sick Bank if not enough sick days have been accrued. Article XVII on page 25 also allows for adoptive parents to take up to two years of unpaid child-rearing leave.

Grants Can Supplement School Funding

If you have ever thought of a great idea for a class project or field trip, or even just wanted an every-day piece of classroom equipment but was denied because of a lack of funding, you could consider applying for one of the many grants that are available to teachers. While some of the larger ones have a lengthy application process, many grants for smaller amounts of money have relatively quick applications that can be done online. Here are just a few of those that have deadlines that have not passed yet:



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF THE HUDSON VALLEY**

SERVING DUTCHESS, ULSTER & PUTNAM COUNTIES

Fund for Excellence in Education Teacher Grants

This Community Foundation grant is for Dutchess County teachers to use for special projects to be done with their classes or for professional development.

Website: cfhvny.org/Receive/Grants/Grant-Programs.aspx

Deadline: February 15

Taconic IPA Science Education Grants

This Community Foundation grant is for teachers to expand students' learning opportunities in the sciences through the acquisition of science equipment.

Website: cfhvny.org/Receive/Grants/Grant-Programs.aspx

Deadline: February 15

Hyde Park Bus Grants

This award is offered by the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites and the FDR Presidential Library & Museum for student transportation to one of the many historic sites in Hyde Park.

Website: www.teachingthehudsonvalley.org/Grants/Grants/Visit-Hyde-Park

Deadline: Rolling



The Michael Davis Music Is Revolution Mini-Grant

This program is for activities designed by teachers to implement, support, and/or improve their ability to provide quality music education for their students. Funds may be used for supplies, equipment, field trip transportation and/or to bring a performer to the school.

Website: www.svengirly.com/mir2/pdf/Mini_Grant_Application.pdf

Deadline: April 15

National Weather Association Sol Hirsch Education Fund Grants

These grants are awarded to help improve student education in the science of meteorology. It is intended to allow teachers to purchase materials and/or equipment, begin or enhance a meteorology program, or attend courses or workshops related to meteorology.

Website: www.nwas.org/grants/solhirsch.php

Deadline: June 1



Try searching online at www.getedfunding.com to find more available grants.

Grant writing assistance is available at the ATA office through one of our volunteers. For more information contact the office at 845-454-7002 or ata4547002@aol.com.

ARLINGTON *Team Hope*

The 7th Annual Gift of HOPE dress down day will be taking place on April 11th. HOPE stands for Helping Others Pursue Education. For the past eight years college scholarships have been awarded to over 90 students in the Arlington School District who have suffered the loss of a parent or guardian at some point in their academic endeavors. We currently have 19 graduating seniors who are eligible to receive a scholarship.

Along with our new design we have also decided to continue our tradition of a March Madness basketball tournament. This is an evening filled with fun and excitement that will involve the entire district. This year we will have hamburgers, hot dogs, and sausage and peppers served with a side and a drink available from 4:30pm throughout the entire evening.

We have a round-robin-style basketball tournament, two preliminary games, a consolation game, and the finals. Each game will consist of two ten minute running halves. Doors will open at 4:30pm on April 11th at Arlington High School. Introductions will begin at 6:00pm, with tip-off at 6:30pm. Admission will be \$5.00, or \$3.00 for anyone wearing HOPE apparel!

Order forms will be collected no later than March 10th. Forms will be available at each school. Please send orders to Marc Provost at AHS through interoffice mail. Cash or checks accepted.

Checks can be made payable to: **Gift of HOPE**
 Sent to: **Arlington High School (Attention Marc Provost)**
1157 Route 55, LaGrangeville, NY 12540

All of the proceeds will benefit the students of Arlington High School. Please show your support by ordering a shirt and wearing it on the day of March Madness. All of your continued support and cooperation with this great cause is appreciated. Thank you for your time.

T-SHIRT <i>SIZE:</i> SMALL MEDIUM LARGE X-LARGE XX-LARGE \$15.00 <i>Quantity:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	LONGSLEEVE <i>SIZE:</i> SMALL MEDIUM LARGE X-LARGE XX-LARGE \$20.00 <i>Quantity:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
HOODIE S.S. <i>SIZE:</i> SMALL MEDIUM LARGE X-LARGE XX-LARGE \$40.00 <i>Quantity:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	LADIES' FITTED TEE <i>SIZE:</i> SMALL MEDIUM LARGE X-LARGE XX-LARGE \$15.00 <i>Quantity:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____



Men's Tee



Premium Hoodie



Longsleeve Tee

Womens' Tee



All items are Comfort Colors brand in color Crimson Garment-Dyed cotton. (Dark Red Washed-Look)



HELPING OTHERS PURSUE EDUCATION

NAME: _____ SCHOOL: _____ GRADE: _____

Check or cash for my shirt order is enclosed in the amount of \$ _____

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

I would like to additionally donate \$ _____ to "The Gift of HOPE" (optional)

2013 — 2014 ATA Officers

President

Bob Maier

First Vice-President

Greg Nieman

Second Vice-President

Steve Hertzog

Treasurer

Kathleen Blank Cicala

Chief Negotiator

Donna Doerrier

PR Committee Chair

TBA

Community Action Chairs

Betsy Marshall

Robert McHugh

Welfare Trust Chair

Ron Higgins

Media Specialist

Sam Falk

Éminence Grise Emeritus

Robert McHugh

Senior Building Representatives

ASM — Johanna Pungello

BES — Anne Schillinger

NES — Elise Pattison

VFES — Pam Goetz

OPS — Anne Marie Beesmer

Traver — Siouxzanne Harris

JDWR — Betsy Marshall

TIS — Sue Ramsden

AMS — Carmine Anastasio

LMS — Steve Bronzi

UVMS — Jim DeBonis

AHS — John Filor

AHS — Noreen Mills Martin

What's Going On?

"What's Going on" is a monthly feature of The Educator. 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.

Arlington High

Science teacher Cindy Binnie recently received a grant from the Mid-Hudson

Chapter of the American Chemical Society to purchase laboratory supplies.

LOTE teacher Ester Fallon was awarded a grant from the Italian American Committee on Education for educational materials for her Italian classes.

English teacher Julie Jee was a presenter at a round table discussion at the National Council of Teachers of English annual conference that took place in Boston in November.

Jee has also won a field trip grant from the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. She was able to take her AP English seniors to see Frank Langella in a production of

King Lear at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on February 4.

Union Vale Middle

Health teacher Kathleen Vogt and several physical education teachers attended the annual New York State Association for Health, P.E., Recreation, and Dance Conference in November.

Special Education teacher Karen Sipperly once again organized the annual trivia competition that benefits the Red Hook Library. Each year many Arlington teachers compete in the charity event. This year it was held on January 26.

PAC Update Cont.

Continued from page 2 be it resolved; that based upon the above beliefs the Arlington Board of Education asks for cooperation and support in advocating for changes to those state and federal rules, laws and regulations which run counter to our beliefs and to the best interests of our Arlington students."

In the coming weeks the proposed resolution will be presented at various PTSA meetings and a request for feedback will be made from the larger community.

-Betsy Marshall, CAC Chair

Change Made to Dental Benefits

So far this year the Personal Health account has increased to \$375 per family and the Vision plan has increased to \$325 per family.

In addition, the trustees of the Welfare Trust have made a commitment

to improve the Dental plan.

One reason why we have so few participating dentists is because our dental plan has a separate schedule for dependents that pays significantly less than for the employee. Arlington is one of

the few locals that has a separate schedule. Our goal is to improve the dependent schedule to eventually match the employee schedule.

The trustees of the Welfare Trust have made a commitment to improve the Dental plan.

Therefore, starting on January 1, 2014 the preventative portion of the dependent schedule was increased to match the employee schedule. We anticipate that this change will cost us about \$85,000 over the next year.

-Ron Higgins,
Welfare Trust Chair

2014 Will Be a Challenging Year For the ATA

Continued from Front

lot of work ahead, and I predict more challenges to this process before it is over.

We have been enjoying a bit of a respite in the discussion of contract talks. This is that honeymoon period after a settlement. We had agreed to a committee of study to explore a change for new employees, but unfortunately we were not able to reach an agreement with the District over a recalibrated salary schedule.

The negotiation team and I could not allow the change to the schedule that the Board of Education was looking for. The BOE's desire was to control salaries to a significantly lower level in the future. This would have divided our association, and it was nothing we could agree to. With this

said, the last year of our agreement falls off, and we will be back to the negotiations table before this June. Chief Negotiator Donna Doerrier has already asked the membership for suggestions for the next round of bargaining. Thank you to all that submitted, and in short order we will be preparing to work toward our next settlement.

This year moving forward we are once again facing some serious challenges at the district level. The Board of Education is addressing the issue of declining enrollment and recently voted to close the Arlington Middle School building as a middle school, and then reopen it as an elementary school. This will require the movement of the Arthur S. May Elementary population of faculty and students to the AMS campus. It is going to be a monumental undertaking to move two schools in an or-

chestrated dance to open in September. We all know that this is not what any of us would like to see happen, but as the student population in the middle schools is steadily declining, the need to manage the District's resources is most important. As we rose to the occasion when we closed LaGrange Elementary several years ago, I will be calling on the membership to volunteer some time to assist in the packing of AMS and ASM. The task is huge, and

As we rose to the occasion when we closed LaGrange Elementary several years ago, I will be calling on the membership to volunteer some time to assist in the packing of AMS and ASM. The task is huge, and more hands will make an easier time of it.

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In the past year, the ATA has experienced some great losses to our family. The most recent loss was that of Mike Garran, a 6th grade Social Studies teacher from AMS. In the last few years his position had evolved to teach ELA, but I am sure if you knew Mike you would agree that he would like to be remembered as a Social Studies teacher. Mike was the man who brought history and social studies alive for his students. He always captivated the students with his knowledge and made it real to a 6th grader. Mike was a strong ATA supporter, and was first a volunteer, and then an elected building representative for AMS. Mike was someone that the majority of the faculty would go to in the building with their issues and concerns. He was a true leader, and a

man that will be missed by many.

Looking forward, the future brings some great uncertainty. What the State is going to do with the Common Core, and the impact that will have on students and faculty remains to be seen. The ATA is involved in the movement to address the shortfalls of the State in this implementation. We continue to face the challenge of declining enrollment, and the impact that will have on our faculty. There is no secret

that with the decline in student population the ATA faces continued layoffs for the next few years. We continue to work to mitigate these losses with those retiring, but this will not contain them all. Understand that this is truly troubling to us, and we will continue to work on behalf of our membership.

So this brings me to the end of my State of the Union address for this year. The story is not very wonderful. Understand that we as the ATA leadership continue to work on behalf of our membership because we feel we can make a positive change on behalf of you all. Please reach out to us if you have something you wish to share about the happenings in our District, or the State Education Department. The time is now that we all need to be more proactive in protecting the future of our profession. Please get more involved with the ATA, and also get more involved in the struggle with the State over the Common Core. Educate yourself, or ask us, and we can provide you with all the information available to understand how much our profession is under siege.

-Bob Maier, ATA President

Dates to Remember

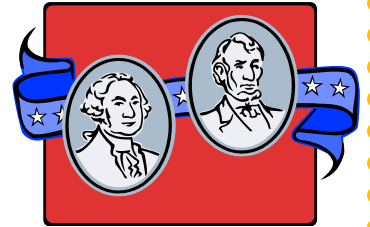


FEBRUARY

- 11th—Board of Education Meeting: Budget Workshop, 7 p.m., VFE
- 14-18th—President's Day Weekend - No School
- 22nd—Math, Science, and Technology Fair, 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m., AHS
- 25th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
Board of Education Meeting: Budget Workshop, 7 p.m., CAO

MARCH

- 11th—Board of Education Meeting: Budget Workshop, 7 p.m., JDWR
- 13th—Community Budget Forum, 7 p.m., CAO
- 18th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432
- 25th—Budget Adoption, 7 p.m., OPS
- 28th—Professional Development Half Day



Announcements

The Garan Family was gracious enough to help my son Zachary and my family through Zachary's illness of Leukemia. For anyone who does not know, Mike's son is a Leukemia survivor. Mike was available by email or cell any time I had a question. I would like to give back to the family by taking donations to help them through this tragedy. Please send your donations to me at the High School. Checks can also be mailed c/o McHoul Funeral Home, Inc., PO Box A, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533. Thank you.

- Scott Cookinham

Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at the Lunch Box in Poughkeepsie from 4 - 6 p.m. on March 10 and 14. Contact Colleen Napora at AHS to sign up.

Stay informed! Like us on Facebook or check out www.arlingtonteachers.com for forms, photos, calendars, and more.

PR Chair Needed!

Would you like the opportunity to make a difference in our community? The ATA is in immediate need of a chairperson for our PR committee. Contact the ATA office at ata4547002@aol.com or (845)454-7002 for more information.