



THE EDUCATOR

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Local Elections Trump National

The presidential election this year is bound to inspire many passionate opinions, but the other races on the ballot this November 8 must be considered just as important, if not more so. While most of the attention has been going to the presidential race, the outcomes of local elections are possibly more integral to the teaching profession and public education.

Consider all of the recent legislation that has impacted what you do in the classroom every day. Common Core, APPR, the Dignity Act, the tax cap - those were all enacted by New York politicians that you have the opportunity to vote for or against. They have a direct say on matters such as school

funding, certification requirements, and pension protections. As a public school teacher you can't afford to be a bystander in the political process.

It is easy to take sides regarding the circus in

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Washington, but when it comes to local politics you must consider yourself an educator foremost, not a Republican or a Democrat. No one candidate is going to hold the same beliefs as you on every single issue, so you must vote based on those areas that will have the most direct

impact on the lives of you and your family. Education policy and funding is surely at the top of that list for educators.

In the following pages you will find endorsements from NYSUT and information about local races that may help in your Election Day decisions. Do your own research though. Look past the party labels and vote for candidates that you think will be best for your profession and your community. On November 8 make sure you exercise your right to help choose those who will represent your views in Albany.

-Sam Falk, editor



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Trivia Challenge

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

When was Thanksgiving first recognized as a national holiday?

Last month no correct responses were received. As of June 30, 2015 there were **8634** students attending the Arlington Central School District.

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

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to rmchugh@acsdny.org by November 11th. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

Union Representation Is Your Right

As we progress through the year, there have been questions from members about their rights to union representation in meetings with administration. This is a difficult issue to address, but it is very important that each ATA member understands his or her rights.

First, let me say I would hope, as professionals, we continue to participate in meetings to discuss programs, children's progress, and even

personal evaluations. In these instances we may not always be in agreement with administration, but professional conversations would not require union representation to be present. From time to time there are instances where a person may be uncomfortable with the questioning or the direction of the conversation led by the administrator. If this happens there are very important legal rights that our members have available.

All tenured teachers are entitled to what are called Cadet Rights. The 3020-a hearing process is the sole method by which tenured teachers can be disciplined in New York State, and the statute provides that no teacher can be compelled to testify at the hearing. Consequently, it has been established that a teacher can refuse to answer questions, without being found insubordinate, during an investigation that the teacher believes could lead to such disciplinary ac-

tion. Known as Cadet Rights, this principle was established through a 1994 disciplinary case involving a tenured teacher who was found guilty of misconduct through a 3020-a hearing. If a tenured teacher is asked questions in an investigation that the teacher believes could lead to disciplinary action, the teacher has the right to assert Cadet. By doing so, the teacher cannot be held insubordinate when refusing to answer such questions. It is

So then the question is raised, when should I have a union representative or officer with me in dealing with an administrator? Of course for any issue of an investigation for discipline, all ATA members have the right to union representation. With that said, the question that follows is, how would I know?

important to understand the precedent does not extend to our untenured faculty. For our untenured faculty, administration has more latitude as the rights of the tenure laws have not been earned at that point.

So then the question is raised, when should I have a union representative or officer with me in dealing with an administrator? Of course for any issue of an investigation for discipline, all ATA members have the right to union representation. With that said, the question that follows is, how would I know?

First I will share that the district administration have

been educated on this, and they should know if they are investigating something that could border on discipline. In these cases they are required by law to offer you union representation. This should be offered in the form of a sentence in a letter or email, or even stated at the beginning of your conversation. At this time I would encourage you to invoke your right. The union leadership understands the law, and we understand the

process. This doesn't provide protection, but it will ensure that you will be treated fairly and provided with due process.

Lastly, in instances where you are in a conversation, or have been asked to meet with an administrator about an issue that raises your radar and you feel uncomfortable, you should reach out and ask ATA leadership for clarification.

We always remain available to answer your questions as to whether your situation rises to the necessity for representation. We would like to make sure that you understand your rights, and are always treated fairly.

As stated earlier, this is a difficult issue to confront. There have been instances that have raised these questions for us, and I wanted to make sure that all ATA members are on the same page. Please feel free to reach out if you would like further clarification.

-Bob Maier, ATA President

Where Does My Dues Money Go?

You may have noticed that the first paycheck in October begins the deductions for your union dues. The dues that will be deducted from all full-time members for this school year will be \$885.46. I always have mixed feelings sharing this number with our new members at their luncheon in August since the immediate thought for these folks and maybe you right now gravitate toward: "Where is that money going?" and "What is it going to be used for?" and of course "What do I get?" I hope to be able to shed some light on these questions and help you see the good work that these dollars are doing on our behalf.

The total amount of dues deducted can be divided into three parts. NYSUT will keep \$378, The AFT gets \$228.36, and \$278.50 will stay here with the ATA. Our ATA

portion has been specifically budgeted by our treasurer, Dave Cordella. The ATA budget is presented to the executive council in the spring for analysis, discussion, and vote of adoption. Our organization uses

Some of the Benefits Afforded by Union Membership:

- A negotiated contract with a salary schedule
- Job protections
- Access to affordable health care
- Welfare Trust reimbursements
- Group discounts on insurance
- Consumer discounts on products and services
- Free legal representation

this money for our daily operations, the mortgage and maintenance of our building and property, paying stipends to officers and committee chairs, and the salary of our part time administrative assistant. All of

these expenses are subject to an internal audit performed annually by a committee of ATA members, as well as an external audit provided by an outside firm. As far as the NYSUT and AFT portions, we can easily find their financial state-

ments on their websites and see how money is spent as a reflection of the priorities of these organizations. But then, the question of "What do I get?" remains unanswered.

Belonging to a union provides a great deal of benefits. We all benefit by having our contract. You have the peace of mind knowing your salary, benefits, and working conditions are established and defended. Even in the event that our contract expires, the language continues to be in effect until a new settlement is voted in by you, thanks
See Dues on Page 7

Introducing: New CAC Co-Chair Brendan Lawler

I am honored to join the ATA team and represent all of you as the co-chair of the Community Action Committee. Robert McHugh has done a great job representing us and I hope to follow his lead. I am privileged to be starting my fourteenth year working with Robert at AHS as a fellow social studies teacher. Growing up in a union house, I understand the important roles that a union plays in representing its membership. The CAC is an important part of the ATA and I will work hard to represent your interests in Albany and in the district. I have become increasingly active in politics in the last few years, carrying petitions for candidates and working on their campaigns. I will use that experience to voice our concerns to elected officials and do everything possible to minimize the impact that APPR and Common Core have on our profession. In addition, I will work with the rest of the Executive Council to endorse candidates for the school board and advocate for the passage of the budget each spring. I look forward to working with all of you. Please feel free to contact me about any suggestions you have or if you would like to help the CAC achieve its goals. Our unity is our strength.

-Brendan Lawler, CAC Co-Chair

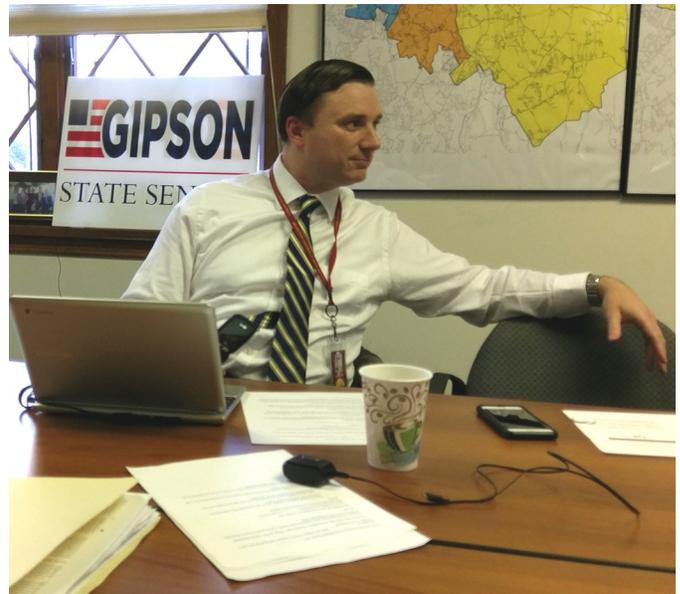


Photo by Sam Falk

New CAC Co-Chair Brendan Lawler led a group of ATA members making phone calls to fellow NYSUT members in support of NYS Senate candidate Terry Gipson at the ATA Office on October 25.

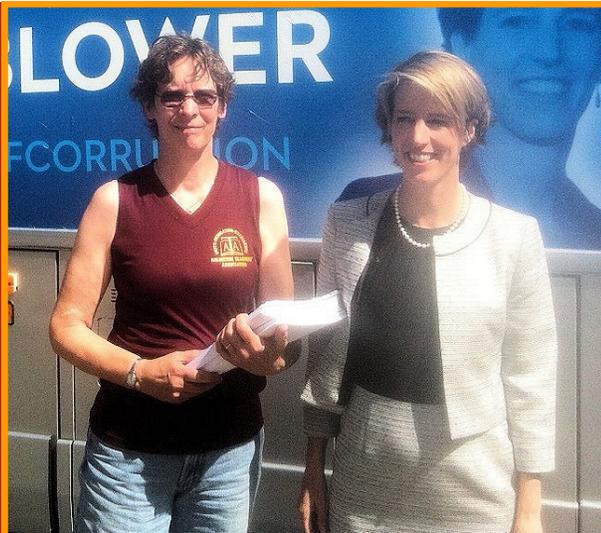
Election 2016 Information

Each year NYSUT endorses candidates for the November elections. The endorsements, which are non-partisan, are based on the candidates' voting records on educational issues. The issues considered include charter school reform, education funding, teacher rating, and the property tax cap. Below are the local endorsements.

Please remember to vote on November 8th!

District 19

U.S. President	Hillary Clinton (D)
U.S. Senate	Chuck Schumer (D/WF/I)
U.S. House of Representatives	
<i>District 18</i>	Sean Patrick Maloney (D/WF/I)
<i>District 19</i>	Zephyr Teachout (D/WF)
NY State Assembly	
<i>District 103</i>	Kevin Cahill (D/WF/I)
<i>District 104</i>	Frank Skartados (D/WF/I)
<i>District 105</i>	Joe Torres (D)
<i>District 106</i>	Didi Barrett (D/WF/I)
NY State Senate	
<i>District 39</i>	Chris Eachus (D/WF)
<i>District 40</i>	Terrence Murphy (R/C/I)
<i>District 41</i>	Terry Gipson (D/WF)
<i>District 42</i>	No Endorsement
<i>District 43</i>	Kathy Marchione (R/C/I)
<i>District 46</i>	No Endorsement



Zephyr Teachout (right), District 19 Candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, has been a vocal supporter of public education since she first ran for election (for NYS Governor) in 2014. She is pictured here meeting the ATA's CAC Co-Chair Betsy Marshall during that campaign.



Terry Gipson (center), Former State Senator and District 41 Candidate for NYS Senate, held a press conference at the ATA Office in June 2014 to announce that he was sponsoring anti-Pearson legislation. This is just one example of his commitment to local unions and public education.

District 41

For more information about the election check out these useful websites:

- <https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/votersearch.aspx>
- http://ballotpedia.org/New_York

Don't Just Talk the Talk - Walk the Walk

On October 6 I walked a short distance with a group of extraordinary parents and education activists who had already been walking for four days when I met up with them at a rally in front of Poughkeepsie High School. They had started their walk in New York City on October 2 and planned to reach Albany by October 10, the ten year anniversary of the court decision that found in favor of Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) in its suit against the state for the chronic underfunding of New York public schools.

A bit of history: In 1993, a group of parent advocates filed suit against the State of New York claiming that under the state constitution, every child was entitled to a sound basic education. The parents who filed the suit claimed that the state was not meeting its responsibility to adequately fund the schools that served the children in poor and minority communities. After ten long years of struggle in the courts, the parents, in conjunction with a number of public education advocacy groups, organized a walk from NYC to Albany to bring attention to the fact that too many children in poor and minority neighborhoods were not receiving a sound basic education. In 2006 the highest court in the state found for the plaintiffs and prescribed a remedy demanding equitable funding for all NY public schools. A foundation aid formula was set and the state finally began to address the inequities within the education funding system. For two years the funding formula was followed. Then the economy

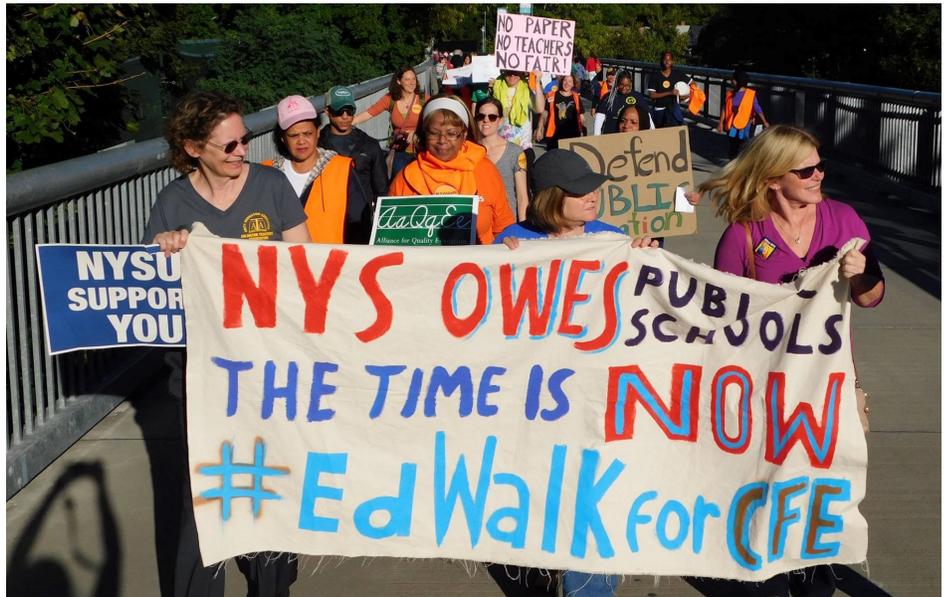


Photo Courtesy of Betsy Marshall

CAC Co-Chair Betsy Marshall (left) joined a group of parents and education activists on the Walkway Over the Hudson on October 6 as part of their walk to raise awareness of the Campaign for Fiscal Awareness.

was broadsided by the economic collapse of 2008. The commitment to our children's education was set aside while Wall Street and the banks were shored up. Funding streams under the foundation aid formula were frozen and an additional 2.7

has still not given back the money that was taken away from our children. Over the past two years there have been incremental increases to education funding but according to information compiled by the Alliance for Quality Education, children in the state of New York are still owed 3.9 billion dollars. Governor Cuomo, and those in power within the state legislature have decided that they no longer need to follow the ruling of the highest court in the land. Instead they continue to blame teachers for the inequities within

Which of the candidates running to represent New York Senate District 41 do you suppose attended the rally in front of Poughkeepsie High School? Hint; it was not our current state senator Sue Serino. It was Terry Gipson who showed up to walk with teachers and parents on October 6.

billion dollars was cut from school aid.

At the same time that funding for our children's education was cut, a campaign to blame teachers and make them the scapegoats for the systemic failures of an underfunded public school system was put into motion. Now, eight years after the financial meltdown of 2008, and ten years after the CFE lawsuit was won in the courts, the state of New York

our system and have demanded accountability for teachers and school principals, but not for themselves. As our state senate representatives and Governor Cuomo continue to appease the billionaires and hedge fund managers who fund their campaigns, and as they continue to push school privatization schemes, too many of our children are still left in schools where inadequate funding has

See Public on Page 7

2016—2017 ATA Officers

President

Bob Maier

First Vice-President

Greg Nieman

Second Vice-President

Steve Hertzog

Treasurer

Dave Cordella

Chief Negotiator

Robert McHugh

PR Committee Chair

Kristine Jackson

Community Action Co-Chairs

Brendan Lawler

Betsy Marshall

Welfare Trust Chair

Ron Higgins

Communications Chair

Sam Falk

Senior Building Representatives

ASM — Erica Dunn

BES — William Mueller

NES — Nicolle McMorris

VFES — Pam Goetz

OPS — Christene Way

Traver — Diana Judge

JDWR — Chris Greco

TIS — Sue Ramsden

LMS — Shared

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.

LaGrange Middle

Emma Levine, an LMS 6th grade student, is bat-

ting a rare form of cancer. Emma's classmates teamed up with student council and many LMS teachers to raise money through a Milkshake Fundraiser that was held on October 19. It was entertaining and delicious! Jean Cropley, Barbara Breslow, Christia Besko, Pauline Quattrone, Kristine Jackson, Elyssa Napoleon, Suzann Peterson, Deborah Ann Raffaele, Stephen Bronzi, Lauren Feliciano, Rachael Klein, Michael O'Halloran, Laura Portaro, Jennifer Fischetti and Brian Fallis teamed up by donating the supplies needed for the milkshake and mixing over 500 shakes during four lunch periods. The money raised will be sent to Emma's family to

help assist them in the medical costs. Student Council will also be sending her a care package with LMS Spirit Wear.

Vail Farm Elementary

Melissa Cordonni (Special Education teacher) and Alethea McMorris (Speech-Language Pathologist) are working with 4th and 5th grade volunteers who will be paired with students who have special needs as part of a new peer-to-peer program called "Be the One Buddies". This group will provide opportunities for our students to learn from each other as they develop friendships and engage in social interactions.

PR Update: The ATA Helps Its Community

The PR committee was off to a strong start this year as a group of volunteers worked at the Arlington Street Fair on September 24, 2016. We had bookmarks with coloring templates for the children to create, as well as stickers, and some American flags to give out. The bookmarks encouraged our community members to keep reading for pleasure, but it also allowed our ATA members a chance to chat with parents as their children colored. Overall, it was a very positive experience as the people who stopped by seemed very supportive of the teachers at Arlington.

Due to inclement weather, our highway clean-up was postponed until October 29, 2016.

Thanks to Debbie Pollack for all her work in organizing this event. Many ATA members from across the district volunteered to help, and it is wonderful to see so many people either



continuing to be involved in our union, or volunteering for the first time.

Our next district-wide initiative is our dress-down for charity event on Tuesday, November 22. The PR committee voted to support local charities and organizations on a rotating

basis, so this year we will collect money for the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie. The mission of this organization is: *Dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment that improves lives and empowers at-risk children and families in the Hudson Valley and surrounding communities.* You will be getting more information from the PR representative from your building shortly. Please consider contributing to this very worthy cause!

If you have any questions or concerns, or are looking for volunteer opportunities, please contact Kristine Jackson at kjackson@acsdny.org.

-Kristine Jackson, PR Chair

Public Education Must Be Equitably Funded

Continued from Page 5
increased class sizes and good programs continue to be eliminated.

So on October 6, on the tenth anniversary of the court decision to equitably fund public education, I joined up with a group of parents and educators who once again decided to take a 150 mile walk from NYC to Albany in order to bring attention to the continued plight of our children and the continued underfunding of our public schools....

Which brings me to the

subject of our upcoming election. Which of the candidates, running to represent New York Senate District 41, do you suppose attended the rally in front of Poughkeepsie High School? Hint; it was not our current state senator Sue Serino. It was Terry Gipson who showed up to walk with teachers and parents on October 6. When Terry Gipson briefly held District 41's senate seat, from January 2013 through January 2015, he was one of the senate's strongest advocates for teachers, our unions, and

the children who attend our public schools.

As a teacher, the education of our community's children will be my primary consideration when deciding whom to vote for on November 8. If I lived in senate district 41, I would definitely be casting my vote for a man who recognizes that professional educators must be allowed the autonomy necessary to guide the education of our children. Terry Gipson will be the champion that we need in Albany.

-Betsy Marshall, CAC Co-Chair

Union Dues Provide Many Benefits to Members

Continued from Page 3
to the Triborough Amendment and union lobbying efforts. Besides contractual protection, union membership also provides greater access to affordable healthcare. We have better access to health and dental coverage than most members of the private sector due to our union membership and the participation of ATA President Bob Maier on the board of directors of the Dutchess Health Insurance Consortium (DHIC). Being a member of such a large labor organization provides group discounts for life, auto, renters, and homeowners insurance, as well as consumer discounts on products and services including wireless phone service, car rentals, hotels, and more. Check out the member benefits section at NYSUT.org and AFT.org to find some great deals.

Union membership also provides access to resources to help you with certification and professional growth. NYSUT offers several workshops and trainings through our regional office and the Education and Learning Trust to assist members as we continuously improve our practice.

NYSUT and the AFT have also provided a means for our collective voice to be heard by lawmakers. Through lobbying efforts supported by member's voluntary contributions to VOTE COPE, and continued participation in community efforts of our active and vocal membership, we have produced a long record of successes in protecting the education, healthcare, and human service professions.

In case you didn't know, NYSUT provides legal representation at no cost to you. NYSUT has a staff of attorneys who are highly experienced in education and labor law and are available to assist members with job-related issues. They protect the right to arbitrate grievances in court and enforce arbitration decisions made in your favor. We also are provided with a labor relations specialist who has extensive experience and expertise in workplace issues.

Don't forget, your union dues are tax deductible! The deductible amount is not exactly \$885.46 since the deductions are from the second half of last school year and the first half of this school year. I recommend making a copy of your final

paycheck stub from the end of December to share with your tax preparation professional. You may find other deductible expenses, like health insurance, United Way deductions, and more!

Finally, if you have not yet been convinced that your union dues money is working hard for you every day, let me remind you of the ATA Welfare Trust that provides our dental plan, \$400 personal health expense coverage, and \$325 vision expense coverage which in themselves more than return your dues money right back to you through this negotiated set of ATA managed benefits.

I know many members understand and appreciate the value of union membership. Some of you may not have been aware of the full spectrum of support that we gain as a result of belonging to these organizations. I also know as well as you do that the last few years have been tough on unions and union members, but I still feel as though the money I spend on my union dues is some of the hardest working investments in our future.

-Steve Hertzog, 2nd Vice President

Dates to Remember



NOVEMBER

8th—*Election Day*

Superintendent's Conference Day

Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., UVMS

11th—No School—Veterans' Day

15th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

22nd—Dress Down Day to benefit the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie

Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO

23-25th—No School—Thanksgiving

29th—Public Hearing on the Veterans' Tax Exemption 7 p.m., CAO



DECEMBER

1st—Children's Holiday Party, 5 p.m.— 7 p.m., AHS

13th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., Traver



Announcements

Don't Forget To Register!

New York State Law now requires that all teachers register in order to maintain their Professional or Permanent certificates. Make sure to go to <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/> by the end of your birth month to register.

Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at the Lunch Box in Poughkeepsie from 4 - 6 p.m. on November 11 and December 9 and 12. 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.