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Support Your Schools On May 16

This year's school budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 16. The ballot will also include a transportation proposition and three school board positions.

The support of every ATA member is vital to ensure a positive outcome to the budget process. If you do not live in the district it is important that you talk to your friends and family who do and encourage them to get out and vote on the 16th. Make sure to tell them why passage of the budget and the proposition are important to you and how they will benefit the children of this district.

In addition, offer to give them information about the candidates

for school board and explain why it is important for the success of the district to have people on the school board who are able to work with the employees of Arlington to further the educational opportunities that we offer. There are several qualified candidates running, and the ATA has carefully considered whom to endorse.

To the right and below you will find some facts to help you inform others about the 2023—2024 Arlington school budget and propositions. More information about these items can be found at arlingtonschools.org.

Every vote counts!

BUDGET FACTS

- A 1.85% tax levy increase is proposed, which is below the allowable 2.05% cap.
- If the budget fails twice, a contingency budget must be adopted, meaning that an additional \$8.3 million would have to be cut. That would require the elimination of new equipment purchases, and the reduction of positions, programs, and extracurricular activities, among other things.
- Proposition #2 is for the purchase of bus and equipment replacements in order to provide cost predictability. If this proposition does not pass, more buses will likely need repairs as they get older, which could lead to cuts to educational programs to cover these additional costs.

Visit arlingtonschools.org for more information

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Six candidates are running to fill three seats on the Arlington School Board. The ATA is endorsing **Linda Gaines** and **Eileen Snook**. We feel that these candidates will help Arlington to remain a safe, accepting place where all students can excel and faculty and staff are free to be professionals. The ATA believes that the other four candidates are also qualified, but does not make an endorsement for the third position.



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Trivia Challenge

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

What color foods are traditionally part of a Junteenth celebration?

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was

Liz McGrath from BES. She knew that NY-SUT had **four presidents** until this April when a fifth was just elected.

She will be the proud owner of ATA gear. Answer this month's question and you could win ATA gear too!

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to sfalk@acsdny.org by **May 26**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

Spotlight On: Staci Wagner



Photo courtesy of Staci Wagner

LMS ELA teacher Staci Wagner poses in the food pantry that she created and maintains at her school.

LMS ELA teacher Staci Wagner saw a problem and did something about it. "In 2016," she explains, "I had a few students who had food insecurity issues and struggled behaviorally in the classroom, in part, due to the fact that they came to school hungry every day. I researched food banks and backpack programs and began in February of 2017, providing bags of food for eight students."

Students are referred from their elementary school by their social workers or if they were already receiving food from their school pantry. In addition, parents who

call the guidance office can get assistance, and teachers can refer students. Parents sign a permission slip and give allergy information. Students who are part of the program get a backpack to take home on weekends that includes two breakfast items, two lunch items, two servings of fruits and vegetables, two snacks and two drinks. When these students are at school they are receiving breakfast and lunch for free or at a reduced price, so this is an attempt to keep them nourished when they are not at school.

According to Wagner, "Initially, all donations came from the faculty

and staff of LaGrange Middle School. We continued to grow and when the pandemic hit, our numbers increased to 20 students. We delivered to homes and had Amazon food wish lists being fulfilled by staff and parents so that we could continue to provide. Our numbers have only continued to grow. At one point this year, we were up to 31 students. We stay supplied between faculty and staff donations and Stop and Shop started sponsoring us in 2020."

Wagner sums up her experience by saying, "Helping the LMS students in this way makes me feel we are doing what we can to help them be successful. Living in poverty, food insecurity and homelessness are realities our students are living with and it is hard to learn when your basic needs aren't being met. If you see a need in your community, talk to people and do your research! Start small and ask for help. I couldn't keep the pantry going without the weekly assistance I get from Jaime Lolkema, Anastasia Ware, and Julie Cirrito!" Today there are also food pantries in a few of Arlington's elementary schools, and some students at the high school have begun plans for a pantry there.

NYSUT Delegates Gather In Albany



Each Spring NYSUT organizes an annual convention known as the Representative Assembly, or RA. There are three main components to the time spent in this convention. First, NYSUT members join committees to craft resolutions to guide the work and advocacy of NYSUT in the coming year. For exam-

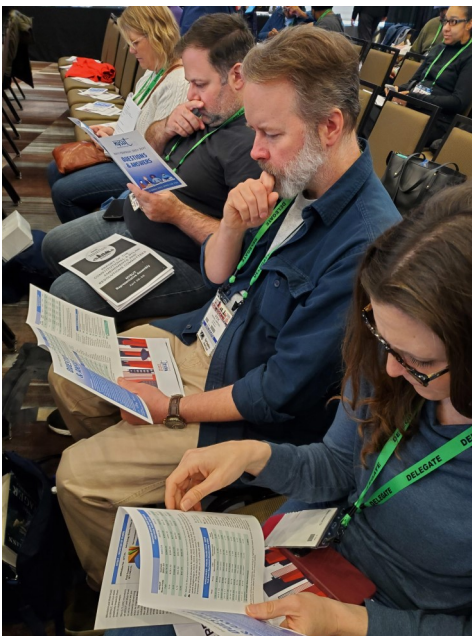


Photo by Sam Falk

ATA Treasurer Dave Cordella (left), Vice President For Membership Steve Hertzog, and BES Senior Building Rep Christie Boydston (right) are shown contemplating resolutions being brought before NYSUT delegates at the RA on April 29.

ple, there is a committee dedicated to social justice that wrote resolutions about NYSUT’s support of the LGBTQ+ community. Another example is a committee about advocating for equity for the members of retirement tier 6. The wording of these resolutions is hammered-out in smaller group meetings, and the final language is brought to the whole representative assembly for discussion and voting.

To add variety to the program, the second component of the RA includes hearing moving and inspiring speeches and video presentations from a variety of elected officials and leaders of the labor movement. Members of this group include Senator Kirsten Gillebrand, NY comptroller Tom DiNapoli, and NY Attorney General Letitia James. Labor leaders who came to fire -up the crowd included AFT President Randi

Weingarten, NEA President Becky Pringle, and NYS AFL/CIO President Liz Shuler, and NYS AFL/CIO President Mario Cilento. This year, notably absent from the list of speakers was Governor Kathy Hochul. Hochul was greeted at last year’s RA with a standing ovation after replacing disgraced Governor Andrew Cuomo and pledging to support public education. A rift has formed this year from the Governor’s support of charter schools and she was not invited to speak to the delegates.

Finally, the third component is celebrating our union through the presentation of a variety of awards and recognitions, as well as highlighting the gains of this year such as the unionizing of the Parker School near Troy, advancing social justice initiatives such as the “many threads, one fabric” program, and gaining membership through expansion into the healthcare industry.

Two members of the NYSUT leadership team retired this year. After 37 years in education and union leadership, NYSUT President Andy Pallotta retired as of the close of the convention. Jolene DiBrango, NYSUT’s executive vice president, also retired this year. Friday night’s election ushered in two new members of the leadership team to replace them. In what seemed a planned and orchestrated set of moves, Melinda Person was elected to the President’s position after years of serving as NYSUT’s executive director and Political Director. Melinda and Andy Pallotta have worked together side-by-side for years and this was a smooth and peaceful transition of power which is not always the case with NYSUT. Replacing Jolene DiBrango

as the executive vice president is Jamie Ciffone. NYSUT second vice president

Ron Gross, and Secretary-Treasurer Phillipe Abraham remain in their positions. Many of the speakers who came praised and thanked Andy and Jolene for their service and positive impact to the labor movement and the education community, and looked forward to the continued success of NYSUT, often citing a quote from a New York Post article from February 25th describing NYSUT this way: “NYSUT isn’t even the 500-pound gorilla in the room,” said one insider. “They’re the two-ton Godzilla in Albany, and you mess with them at your own peril.”

Representing the ATA at the Albany Convention Center on Friday April 28th and Saturday April 29th were Christie Boydston from Beekman Elementary, and Sam Falk, Dave Cordella and Steve Hertzog from AHS.

-Steve Hertzog,
ATA VP For Membership

For more information about the RA go to <https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources/sites/representative-assembly>

Rebuilding Our Community Together

This year's Rebuilding Together Dutchess County event took place on April 29. Once again the ATA and Poughquag United Methodist Church (PUMC) teamed up to make several repairs in a house in our community on the south side of the town of Poughkeepsie. It was raining and cold but it was a day spreading sunshine and smiles to one of our neighbors.

Homeowner Ann Newman has been living in her home since the 1960s. Her lovely husband passed away many years ago and she has not been able to keep up with the physical care of the house, inside and outside. Mrs. Newman has been holding many memories in that house along with tons of artifacts of Mr. Newman. She enjoys the frequent company of her best friend Fran and her daughter Kerry.

ATA donated funds to purchase materials for the project. The volunteers insulated water utility pipes, removed old carpet from the basement and first floor, replaced two long walkways, cleaned the house, painted part of the exterior of the house, and replaced old doors. In addition, the team replaced part of the exterior wall that was torn down, painted the entire foundation of the house, trimmed bushes and other tree branches that were hanging low to make it safer for Mrs. Newman and other people.

Despite the difficult weather conditions, the rain and cold did not prevent volunteers to spend their entire Saturday or a few hours from the day to come out and make a difference by putting a touch of love into Mrs. Newman's house. They walked in mud, worked under tents, walked in and out of the house dumping unwanted items in the big dumpster, as well as organized the house by making it more spacious and a better place for Mrs. Newman to live in.

April 29, 2023 was such a remarkable day that brought a smile on Mrs. Newman's face, a day that will last forever because of how grateful she felt from the warmth and love of her neighbors. She is appreciative to live in a community filled with individuals who care for each other and lend a hand to support one another when needed. The project meant the world to Mrs. Newman, her friend Fran, and her daughter Kerry.



Photos from left to right show the progression of the work on the new walkway that volunteers installed at the house of Ann Newman in Poughkeepsie on April 29.



Photos Courtesy of Eleni Anemelos



A big thank you to ATA retiree Doug Dickeson (UVMS) and his family for always assisting with Rebuilding Together projects and representing our ATA. Also, a thank you to teachers and their family members from LMS (Shannon Madden and Debbie Pollack and her husband John), UVMS (Megan McGinnis), BES (Alicia Jazayeri and Xiang'e Bove), TIS (Juliet Menasche and her son Zach), ASM (Judy McGuire), as well as AHS seniors Joanna Anemelos, Deacon Sawyer, and Julia Bove for their willingness to help a member of our community. If you ever want to drive by and admire the gorgeous walkways and other work of our colleagues and the PUMC volunteers, please reach out for additional information.

-Eleni Anemelos AHS

2022 — 2023 ATA Officers

President

Bob Maier

Elementary Vice President

Nicolle McMorris

Secondary Vice President

Greg Nieman

Vice President For Membership

Steve Hertzog

Treasurer

Dave Cordella

Chief Negotiator

Robert McHugh

PR Committee Chair

Kristine Jackson

Community Action Chairs

Brendan Lawlor

Bill Mueller

Welfare Trust Chair

Ron Higgins

Communications Chair

Sam Falk

Senior Building Representatives

ASM — A'Rehema Leach

BES — Christie Boydston

Noxon— Lynette Battle

VFES— Gwen Moschetto

OPS — Christene Way

Traver — Diana Judge

JDWR—Barbara Mackey

TIS — Heather Blatz

LMS — Chris Greco

UVMS — Jim DeBonis

AHS — John Filor

AHS — Theresa Daleo-Stock

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

Special Education teacher Rhonda Owens was the recipient of an Innovative Teacher Grant from the New York State PTA in March.

Science teacher Sam Falk was selected as the Mid-Hudson section of the American Chemical Society's 2023 recipient of their Award For Excellence in High School Chemistry Teaching.

Social Studies teacher Kathy Bellino taught a class called "An Overview and Strategies for Implementing the NY State Seal of Civic Readiness" through the Mid-Hudson Teacher Center on April 26.

Science teacher Stephanie Marden ran the Millbrook Marathon on April 16.

English teacher Julie Jee attended the Educator Conference for Human Connection (ECHC)



Photo courtesy of Debbie Pollack

Highway Cleanup

The ATA's annual spring highway cleanup was held on Saturday, April 22. LMS math teacher Debbie Pollack organized the event to help improve the appearance of Route 55. She was joined by Eleni Anemelos and her daughter Joanna, Marion Quinn, Jean Cwik, Joe-Lynn Ginese, Janine Rossi and her friend Esosa Ognide, Jen Jensen, Michele Simonetty, Megan McGinnis, Juliet Menasche and her son Deacon, Scott Jakubek and his daughter Elizabeth, and Xiang'e Bove.

hosted by #ClearTheAir on April 1 at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. ECHC is a "face-to-face event designed for educators to experience playfulness, connection and flow, and to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to cultivate community and belonging in their contexts."

Arlington Music

UVMS music teacher William Stevens conducted the Northern Dutchess Symphony Orchestra in a concert celebrating women composers and performers on April 29 at Rhinebeck High School. Music teachers Marissa Bettina

(LMS), Mia Chong (UVMS), Gina Garabedian (UVMS), and Matt Zydel (TIS) performed that evening as well. There are a number of former Arlington music students and faculty that are professional musicians and members of Northern Dutchess Symphony Orchestra.

Arthur S. May School

Librarian Janice Rifenburg was part of a panel of three educators, two working at the college level and her at the elementary level, who talked about racial literacy, how the work can be done through children's and YA

See ATA on page 7

ATA Members Do Great Things

Continued from page 6
literature, the need for the work, and their personal experiences. Following that was a Q&A session and a presentation by acclaimed author Jerry Craft. The event, called "Reflecting and Looking Forward: Racial Literacy at Vassar and in Poughkeepsie", took place at Vassar College on March 21 and 22.

LaGrange Middle

Art teacher Jill Freeswick was recently named the NY State Art Teachers Association's Region 7 Middle School

Art Teacher of the Year.

Titusville Intermediate

Music teacher Matthew Zydel ran the Paris Marathon on April 2.

Third grade teacher Chris Shave and his family raise sheep at their farm Patchwork Pastures in Hyde Park. They recently took part in the Dutchess County Sheep and Wool Growers Association's Spring Farm Tour.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Do you know something great that an ATA member has done recently? Perhaps they have done charity work, received an award, attended a conference, or even published a book. Let us know by scanning the QR code or going to this link:
<https://forms.gle/aGLYf3LWHqkP5gaS7>





Welfare Trust Reminders

- All welfare trust forms may be found on arlingtonteachers.com
- When a dependent child reaches the age of 19 and is a full time student, submit a student status information form.
- The student status information form must be sent every year once they reach the age of 19 and are enrolled in school.
- As long as a dependent child is a student, they are eligible for benefits until the end of the year they turn 25.
- Personal health and vision years for claims are from October 1-September 30
- Claims for personal health and vision for a given year may be submitted at any time but no later than December 31.
- Personal health - \$425 per family & \$1 per valid claim after you reach \$425.
- Vision - \$375 per family
- Dental year - January 1 - December 31 - \$3000 per member and each dependent
- Hearing aid benefit - \$500 benefit per family every 36 months.
- Please complete an enrollment/change form when any information changes (marriage, children, address change, etc.)

Contact Ron Higgins at the ATA Office at 845-454-7002 with any questions.

Free Relaxation APP Now Available

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce the availability of the premium Calm subscription as a free benefit for all NYSUT in-service members. The subscription provides in-service members and up to five dependents with unlimited access to the full library of content at calm.com and in the Calm app, which can be utilized via a desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile device (iOS or Android). Visit <https://www.calm.com/b2b/nysut-member-benefits/subscribe> to create an account. *Note: Your NYSUT ID number is needed. Go to <https://www.nysut.org/log-in-landing/create-account> or email Steve Hertzog at shertzog@acsdny.org to have it emailed to you, if you cannot find it.*



Dates to Remember



MAY

- 9th—ATA Executive Council Session, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432
Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., ASM
- 16th—**School Budget Vote and School Board Election**
- 19th—Professional Development Half Day
- 23th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO
- 26-29th—Memorial Day Weekend—No School



JUNE

- 1st—Regents Exam Day at AHS—No Classes
- 8th—Elementary School Half Day
- 13th—Last Day of Classes, AHS
ATA Executive Council Session, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432
Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., AHS
- 16th—ATA Recognition Dinner, 5:30 p.m., Christos
- 19th—Juneteenth—No School
- 22nd—Last Day of Classes, All Elementary and Middle Schools
Elementary School Half Day
- 23rd—Last Day of School For Faculty
- 24th—High School Graduation, Dutchess Stadium
- 27th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO



Announcements

If you would like to help out with maintaining the landscaping at the ATA office, please consider joining me on 5/13, and 6/10. Weather permitting, we will meet at 8 a.m. and work for two hours. Tasks may include weeding, mulching, pruning, and planting. Please dress accordingly and bring gloves. Thank you for your consideration.
-Nancy Thomas (OPS)

Scan to sign up →



Anyone interested in learning more about National Board Certification should reach out to Stefanie Rice or Colleen Napora at AHS.

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