



THE EDUCATOR

Newsletter of the Arlington Teachers' Association

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Be An Informed Voter

Big-ticket races like those for the President, Governor, and even state-wide offices, get more press, but really, local government can have more of an impact on our daily lives, and it is your vote that determines who will serve. Races that will be decided this year include those for city councils, town boards, and county legislators.

At the county level, elected officials vote regularly on matters such as giving funding to important areas like improving mental health care and fighting opioid addiction. On the village, town, or city

level, decisions on issues like zoning laws covering the establishment of new businesses are enacted. These are just a few examples of topics that local elected officials vote on that

Before November 7, take the time to educate yourself about the candidates and propositions that will be on your ballot. Helpful resources include your county board of elections (Dutchess's is at www.elections.dutchessny.gov/) or Vote411 (www.vote411.org/ballot).

affect you and your students. In addition, some ballots will even ask you to make the decision as to whether taxpayers can be charged a little more to support their community's library.

This year there are also two statewide propositions on the back of the ballot. You can read on page 2 of this newsletter about the one concerning school funding.

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This election season make sure you exercise your right to help choose those who will represent your views, and those of the people you care about.

-Sam Falk, editor

☆☆☆ NOV. 7 ☆☆☆

VOTE YES ON

PROP 1

Because every student deserves opportunity.

ARLINGTON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
46 Davis Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603



(845) 454-7002 · www.arlingtonteachers.com · ata4547002@aol.com

Political Action Update: Elections

Trivia Challenge

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

Which current Arlington school building is the oldest?

Last month's winner was **Heidi Every** from LMS. She correctly identified **1939** as the date when the year yellow became the official color of American school busses. 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 **November 3**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

Although there are no candidates for statewide elections this November for NYSUT to endorse, the Dutchess County Central Labor Council, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, has endorsed candidates for local elections. The endorsements, which are non-partisan, are based on the candidates' positions on labor issues. Please remember to vote on November 7!

2023 Endorsed Candidates

Dutchess County Clerk	Kenya Gadson
Dutchess County Family Court Judge	Jim Rogers
Dutchess County District Attorney	Anthony Parisi
County Legislator-District 4	Brendan Lawler
County Legislator-District 5	Linda Haas Manley
County Legislator-District 6	Lisa Kaul
County Legislator-District 8	Craig Brendli
County Legislator-District 13	Kathleen Dailey
County Legislator-District 14	Frits Zernike
County Legislator-District 16	Yvette Valdes-Smith
County Legislator-District 21	Eric Eckley
Hyde Park Town Supervisor	Eve Smith
Pawling Town Board	Marty Mygan
Pleasant Valley Town Board	Dan Deegan
Pleasant Valley Highway Superintendent	John Baxter
Town of Poughkeepsie Supervisor	Rebecca Edwards
Wappinger Town Council, Ward 2	Heather O'Dell

Vote Yes On Proposition 1 To Help Students

This year New Yorkers will have an opportunity to change the state's constitution with Proposition 1. This change affects small city school districts, increasing their debt limit from the current 5% to the 10% that suburban and rural schools are permitted. This change would allow the 57 small city school districts across New York state equal opportunities as their rural and suburban counterparts.

Prior to 1997, small city school districts did not need to get voter approval for their annual budgets. Because of this, allowable debt limits were lower than suburban and rural districts. However, since 1997, small city districts have needed voter approval on school budgets and have operated with the same tax levy limitations required by the property tax cap as suburban and rural communities.

Coupled with a debt limit half the size of their counterparts, small city districts also cannot apply a Building Aid offset against their debt limit. That means for capital projects, small city school districts have far less borrowing power than their suburban and rural counterparts, despite having the same approval process from voters.

Our students who are most in need across the state are the ones being hurt most by the current rules regarding small city school debt limits. Voting YES on Proposition 1 is about righting a wrong, it is about supporting students and families, and it is about lifting up communities. **NYSUT strongly supports voting YES on Proposition 1.**

Welfare Trust Benefits You

Welfare Trust Basics

Up-to-date information about Welfare Trust benefits, including printable forms, is always available at arlingtonteachers.com

Benefits At-A-Glance:

As a reminder, the Welfare Trust is part of members' contracted benefits and does not cost active members anything to be enrolled (or to enroll dependents).

Your benefits include:

- Yearly vision reimbursement of \$375 per family
- Yearly personal health reimbursement of \$425 per family
- Yearly dental coverage at a maximum of \$3,000 per family member. Dental reimbursements are determined by dental codes set by the American Dental Association. If you have questions about how much a given procedure will cost, you can call the ATA Office for information.
- Hearing Aid reimbursement of \$500 per family available every 36 months

The plan years for Vision and Personal Health run from October 1 – September 30. The Preferred Group allows a 3-month grace period to submit claims from the previous year (so you have until Dec .30 to submit claims from Oct. 2022 through Sept 2023).

The Dental plan year runs on a calendar year from January through December.

Making Claims:

The Preferred Group has let us know that they are happy to receive claims digitally, via email at claims@tpgplans.com (simply attach scanned copies of your form and receipts) or via the PG Blue Portal at mytpgplan.com. Detailed instructions for submission via email are available from the ATA Office if you need them.

Please note that claims sent via US Mail should be mailed to the Albany address on each form (*Arlington Teachers' Association c/o The Preferred Group, PO Box 15136, Albany, NY 12212-5136*). Be sure to make and keep a copy of any claims you submit.

Important Details:

When a dependent child reaches the age of 19 and is a full-time student, you must submit a *Dependent Student Form*, and resubmit the form every year the dependent is a student. As long as a dependent child is a student, they are eligible for benefits until the end of the year in which they turn 25 years old.

If you have a change of address, name change, or change in dependents (including spouse) please be sure to download a *Welfare Trust Enrollment Form* from the website and submit your change. You can send the form interoffice to the ATA Office or email ata4547002@aol.com

Landscaping Help Needed At the ATA Office

If you would like to help out with maintaining the landscaping at the ATA office, please consider joining me on the second Saturday of each month, with the next date being November 11. 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 →



Get To Know Your New Contract

At the beginning of September, the ATA and the district settled on a contract that will expire in June 2025. While the employee contribution to the cost of health insurance will increase 1% each year of the contract, the salary schedule will increase 2.75% effective July 1, 2023 and 2.25% effective July 1, 2024. Extracurricular stipends will increase following the salary schedule, with the exception of coaching stipends which will increase 3.9% each year. Here are some other notable new provisions:

Child Rearing

- Tenured teachers will be able to use an additional two weeks of their sick time after giving birth or adopting. (This means up to eight weeks of paid leave for a regular birth and 10 weeks for a c-section; six weeks for domestic adoption and eight for international.)
- This provision also guarantees the non-birth parent two weeks of paid leave (using their sick time).
- Foster parents can now use their sick time to take up to two weeks of paid leave (although only once every three years).
- The sick bank cannot be used for these leaves.

Retirement Notice

The deadline for notifying the district of your intention to retire will move from Feb. 1 to Jan. 10.

Step Advancement

This deals with step advancement for ATA members who take unpaid time off.

- Members who are paid for 135 to 200+ paid days in an academic year will receive full step advancement.
- Members who are paid for 45 to 134 days will advance one half step on the schedule.
- Members who are paid for 0 to 44 days will not advance on the schedule.

Conference Days

All superintendent conference days will run on a uniform 8am to 3pm schedule. ATA members will be provided with the agenda for them two weeks in advance.

Class Coverage Rate

The class coverage rate will increase from \$30 to \$32 per period starting this school year.

Elementary Report Cards

A committee will be formed to create a limited number of generic drop-down comments for the first trimester report card. This will be finished by November 1. Teachers will still have the option to write student-specific comments. (This addresses a grievance the ATA had filed about this issue last year.)

Delay Schedule For Elementary PD

For the 2024-25 school year, there will be four two-hour delays built into the elementary schedule for PD in order to reduce the amount of time teachers are pulled from their classrooms while students are present. This is a one-year pilot program that will have to be re-negotiated at the end of this contract.

Credit Hours

- The payment for credits will increase from the current \$74 per credit to \$75 for the 2023-24 school year and \$77 for the 2024-25 school year.
- The lifetime cap on in-service credits earned starting 9/1/23 will increase from 55 to 65.

Curriculum Writing/Summer Pay Rates

- The curriculum writing rate will increase from the current \$45 to \$50 for this school year and \$52 for next year.
- The rate for summer AIS services and CSE meetings will increase from the current \$48 to \$50 this year and \$52 next year.

Sixth Assignment

The pay for middle and high school teachers who teach a sixth assignment will increase from \$10,000 per year to \$11,000.

Paychecks

- The district can require ATA members to receive their paychecks through direct deposit.
- The district has the option to shift to a payment schedule where employees are paid on the 1st and 15th of each month.
- The district can adjust when the payments for a health insurance buyout are made.

Extra-Curricular Money

A fund of \$100,000 will be used to improve extra-curricular stipends that are inadequate or inequitable. A joint committee will determine how these funds will be allocated. The additional funds will be added to the extra-curricular schedule for the 2024-25 school year.

Release Time For IEP Writing

ATA members who have obligations to contribute to the academic goals of at least six students will receive one day of release time (or two half days) to help complete that work. This includes time given on conference days.

Longevity Payments

- The longevity payment for Year 26 will increase from \$3934 to \$4000, and the payment for Year 29 will increase from \$2744 to \$4000 for the 2023-24 school year.
- The longevity payment for Year 23 will increase from \$3313 to \$4000 for the 2024-25 school year.

Middle School Cafeteria Duty

The stipend for middle school cafeteria duty will increase from the current \$301 per semester to \$500 per semester this year and \$600 next year.

National Board

NCLB certified members will receive a stipend of \$3000 per year for up to 15 years if their certification is maintained. The district will no longer reimburse members for the cost of certification or maintenance.

Psychologists As CSE Chairs

Psychologists can volunteer by October 1 to chair up to 10 additional CSE meetings for which they would be paid \$75 per meeting.

Welfare Trust

The district will increase its per-member annual contribution by \$50 for the 2023-24 school year and an additional \$50 per member for the 2024-25 school year. (This is the money used to pay for members' dental, eyeglass coverage, etc.)

MS and HS Coordinators

Middle and high school coordinator stipends will increase the same percentage as the salary schedule.

2023 — 2024 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

NOX — Lynette Battle

VFES — Gwen Moschetto

OPS — Nancy Thomas

TRP — Diana Judge

JDWR — Barbara Mackey

TIS — Heather Blatz

LMS — Bill Mueller

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

Art teacher Sean Bayless hosted a College Board online workshop in the evenings from September 21-28, for new and experienced teachers who want training on best practices for teaching AP Art History. Teachers from this group came from Indiana, Alabama, and Texas.

Arthur S. May

Fourth grade teacher Laura Comizio reports: "October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. To kick off the month, family and friends joined me in supporting Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation by participating in the annual walk at James Baird State Park. Miles of Hope is a Breast Cancer Foundation that supports women local to the Hudson Valley that are affected by breast cancer. After being diagnosed with Stage 4 Breast Cancer last fall, Miles of Hope was one of the first organizations to jump in and ask how they could support me. I will forever be grate-



Photo by Kerri Simeone

LaGrange Middle

French teacher Kerri Simeone (also at AHS) ran a half marathon in Schroon Lake on October 1 as part of the Adirondack Marathon Distance Festival. She reports: "It was a beautiful day for a run! On the shuttle to the start line, I saw somebody wearing ACSD swag. I ran into two young men who graduated from ACSD. They were mentioning some teachers that they had and it was nice catching them up on who's where, retired, etc. They spoke highly of Mr. and Mrs. Biasotti, Mrs. McAndrews, and Mr. Feicht, and their positive experiences as athletes."

ful for their commitment to making the burden of a cancer diagnosis easier for my family and me. Please consider participating in local Miles of Hope events and donating to support others who live right here in our community at <https://milesofhope.org/>."

Overlook Primary

School librarian Mindy Grey has received the National Board's Maintenance of Certification in the area of Library Media - Early Childhood through Young Adulthood.

Reading Specialist Sarah Armstrong recently published an article on the

online education blog *Peers and Pedagogy*. It can be read at <https://tinyurl.com/4edrwx5v>.

West Road Intermediate

Third grade teacher Stephanie Brand is teaching a graduate course called Teaching Content Area Literacy at Marist on Tuesday nights. She says, "We explore topics like multilingual and multicultural approaches, as well as literacy topics such as vocabulary, reading strategies, and writing to learn. I have 24 students in my class, and they are all eager to learn and reflect on their growth."

Member Spotlight: Brendan Lawler

AHS social studies teacher and ATA CAC Co-Chair Brendan Lawler is on the November 7 ballot, running for Dutchess County Legislator in District 4, which includes portions of the towns of Hyde Park, Staatsburg, and Poughkeepsie. The following questions were asked of him by *The Educator*:

What led to your decision to run?

In 2021 I was appointed to the legislature for one year to fill the remainder of an unexpired term. I ran for a full term but lost by 30 votes. I wish to continue serving the public by crafting good policy. I have seen firsthand how the legislature makes poor decisions and uses a secretive process in creating policy.

Has it been challenging to run for office while also being a full-time teacher?

It is an enormous commitment that uses up most of my free time during campaign season. On weekdays, I am usually up at 3:30 and go to bed around 9:30, if I am lucky. A very positive thing is that my experience serving in the legislature and campaigning has helped me to better teach my students.

I have learned a lot about local government, state government, and political parties which informs my teaching of Participa-



Photo by Matt Haynes

AHS social studies teacher Brendan Lawler (right) recently attended the Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation’s Labor Heroes award dinner, where he met past NYSUT president Andy Pallotta (left), and current NYSUT president Melinda Person (center).

tion in Government. My experience as a teacher also makes me better at running and serving because I see so many community needs that have to be addressed.

What do you hope to accomplish, if elected?

The legislature does not currently have a fiscal oversight committee even though it authorizes more than \$500,000,000 in spending every year. I want to establish such a committee so that our tax dollars are accounted for in real time and so that the legislature can craft better policy. I want the county to dedicate more resources to mental health, particularly for our youth, and more resources to aid in recovery from addiction.

What advice do you have for other educators considering running for office?

Do it! We need more good people running for office who are dedicated to public service. The more of us who take that approach, the better our system functions. There will be people who will help to guide you through the process and I am willing to help.

If you are considering a run, reach out to your local party committee and volunteer this year so you can get some experience on the campaign trail before committing to run or deciding against it in 2025 or beyond. The first campaign will feel like your first year of teaching but the second time is much easier.



Dates to Remember



NOVEMBER

7th—*Election Day*

Superintendent's Conference Day

10th—No School—Veterans' Day

14th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., NOX

22-24th—No School—Thanksgiving

28th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432

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



DECEMBER

3rd—ATA Movie Morning, 9:15 a.m., Hyde Park Roosevelt Cinemas

11-14th—Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences (dates vary by school)

12th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO

15th—ATA Children's Holiday Party, 4 - 6:30 p.m., AHS (snow date 12/18)

22-29th—No School—Winter Recess



Announcements

Volunteers Needed!

Help is appreciated for our annual Movie Morning on Sunday, December 3 at Hyde Park Roosevelt Cinemas. We are looking for volunteers to set up, sell raffle tickets, greet guests, and to clean up. 9 a.m. to noon. All proceeds go to benefit the Arlington Education Foundation. If you know of a local business that would like to donate, please let us know! Contact Kristine Jackson at LMS if you can help. Thank you!

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