



THE EDUCATOR

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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. They

also make decisions about community college funding. On the village, town, or city level, decisions on issues like zoning laws covering the es-

make the decision as to whether taxpayers can be charged a little more to support their community's library.

Before November 4, 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 elections.dutchessny.gov/) or Vote411 (vote411.org/ballot).

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

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tablishment of new businesses are enacted. These are just a few examples of topics that local elected officials vote on that affect you and your students. In addition, some ballots will even ask you to



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Trivia Challenge

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

How many days are available for early voting in NY this fall?

Last month's winner was retiree **Kathy Falcone**. She correctly identified **1967** as the date when the year the ATA was founded. 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 **October 31**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

Political Action Update: Elections

Although there are no candidates for statewide elections this November for NYSUT to endorse, the Dutchess County Central Labor Council (DCCLC), 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 4!

2025 Endorsed Candidates

Dutchess County Comptroller	Dan Aymar-Blair
Dutchess County Court Judge	Kara Gerry
County Legislator-District 1	Trevor Redl
County Legislator-District 2	Emma Arnoff
County Legislator-District 3	David Siegel
County Legislator-District 4	Brendan Lawler
County Legislator-District 5	Anna Shah
County Legislator-District 6	Lisa Kaul
County Legislator-District 8	Craig Brendli
County Legislator-District 13	Keith Odums
County Legislator-District 14	Alix Winsby
County Legislator-District 16	Yvette Valdes-Smith
County Legislator-District 20	Kris Munn
County Legislator-District 22	Heidi Tucci
Poughkeepsie Common Council-Ward 8	Daniel Atonna
Poughkeepsie Town Board-Ward 2	Barbara Laird
Poughkeepsie Town Board-Ward 3	Shantha Thangiah
Poughkeepsie Town Board-Ward 4	Emily Watson
Poughkeepsie Town Board-Ward 5	Ryan Sharpe
Poughkeepsie Town Supervisor	Rebecca Edwards
Stanford Town Supervisor	Julia Descoteaux

Front Yard Visits Help Start the Year Right

For the past several years kindergarten teachers in the Arlington Central School District have begun the school year with two half days. Vail Farm Elementary's kindergarten teachers and teacher assistants spend the second half of these two half days visiting students in their front yards. These visits bring a personal touch to the start of the school year and foster a deeper connection between students, parents, and educators. Each child was gifted a book.

During the visits teachers meet with students in their own space, creating a warm, welcoming environment that extends beyond the classroom. By building a rapport and trust with both students and their families, teachers can better understand the unique needs, strengths and interests of each child. This proactive engagement is crucial in laying the foundation for a successful school year.

This personalized interaction is an essential step in fostering a successful school year. Recent research underscores the importance of building positive relationships between educators, students, and their families. Studies have shown that strong family-school partnerships are linked to increased student motivation, higher academic achievement, and improved social-emotional development.

The Vail Farm kindergarten teachers and assistants are committed to cultivating these vital relationships, knowing that a supportive community can make all the difference in a child's educational journey. By stepping outside the classroom and into their students' front yards, they are helping to build a solid foundation for success—both in school and in life.

-Charlene Stratton, VF



Photo Courtesy of Charlene Stratton

Jeannette Roman (Kindergarten Special Ed. Teacher), Charlene Stratton (Kindergarten Teacher), Arianna Hollander (Student Teacher), and Raegan Clark (Kindergarten TA), pose for a picture with their student during her front yard visit.



Photo Courtesy of Charlene Stratton

Meredith Schwarze (Kindergarten Teacher) and Colleen Gruszecki (Kindergarten TA) pose with a kindergarten student at his front yard visit with the book *The Pigeon Goes To School*. All of the students received a book during their visit.

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 2027. While the employee contribution to the cost of health insurance will increase 0.5% in the first year of the contract, there is no increase in the second year. The salary schedule will increase 2.35% effective July 1, 2025, and 2% effective July 1, 2026. Extracurricular stipends will increase following the salary schedule, with the exception of coaching stipends which will increase 3% each year. Here are some other notable new provisions:

Chaperone Pay

The following pay rates will apply for chaperoning field trips that take place during the school year:

<i>Duration (Before or after regular school day)</i>	<i>Payment</i>
2—4 hours	\$80
4 + hours	\$120
Overnight	\$200
Non-workday + overnight	\$320

*Maximum payment per regular workday with overnight = \$200

*Maximum payment per regular workday without overnight = \$120

Teacher Leaders

A committee comprising district and ATA members will be formed to recommend changes to teacher leader positions and their stipends by January 1, 2026. Any changes in compensation made as part of this process will not disadvantage ATA members.

Salary Notices

Salary notices will now come out on May 1, instead of April 1.

Student Teacher Stipends

The stipend for supervising a student teacher will increase from \$200 for part-time and \$300 for full-time to \$300 and \$500, respectively.

Teachers Split Between Buildings

Any teachers split between buildings shall be informed by the beginning of the school year what their primary building will be for the year, and will be clearly informed about their professional responsibilities associated with each building to which they are assigned.

Class Coverage Rate

The class coverage rate will increase from \$32 to \$34 per period starting July 1, 2025.

Longevity Payments

- Effective July 1, 2025, the longevity payment for Year 23 will increase to \$4200.
- Effective July 1, 2026, the longevity payment for Year 26 will increase to \$4200.

Pay For Lunch Or Prep Meetings

ATA members will be paid the class coverage rate (\$34) for attending required meetings during their lunch or prep time (not including APPR meetings). Scheduling meetings during a prep or lunch should only be done when unavoidable.

AP Exam Proctoring

ATA members who proctor AP exams that require them to work longer than the contractual day will be compensated at the hourly rate of \$55.

Elementary Day

Starting on September 1, 2026, there will be at least 15 minutes guaranteed between the start of the elementary work day and the start of the instructional day.

Elementary Half Days

There will be an additional half day at the elementary level for student assessments. This brings the total elementary half days to three.

Hourly Pay Rates

- The curriculum writing rate will increase from the current \$52 to \$55, effective July 1, 2025.
- The rate for AIS services and CSE meetings held beyond the regular work day or work year will increase from the current \$52 to \$55, effective July 1, 2025.
- The rate for school psychologist, social worker and speech teacher summer work will increase from \$52 to \$55, effective July 1, 2025.

After School Meetings

The maximum length of after school meetings (such as faculty meetings) has been decreased from 75 minutes to 60 minutes.

Coverage Pay For Part-time Teachers

Part-time ATA members who cover classes beyond their work day will be paid the class coverage rate, not the substitute rate.

Release Time For IEP Writing

An additional IEP writing release day is given to special education teachers who have "obligations to draft academic goals" for 13 or more students.

AI Language

The District and the ATA agree to collaborate on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the workplace, recognizing its potential impact on instruction, workload, evaluation, and professional responsibilities. AI shall not replace the professional judgment of educators, and its use must comply with all applicable privacy, data security, and ethical standards.

Middle School Cafeteria Duty

The stipend for middle school cafeteria duty will increase from the current \$600 per semester to \$800.

New Educator Orientation

New educators will receive inservice credit for all required orientation sessions before the school year starts.

Secondary Coordinator Stipends

- Effective July 1, 2025, middle school special education coordinators shall receive a stipend increase to \$4000 (increasing 2% on July 1, 2026).
- High school and middle school coordinator stipends will increase the same percentage as the salary schedule.

Welfare Trust

The district will increase its per-member annual contribution by \$50 for each year of the contract. (This is the money used to pay for members' dental, eyeglass coverage, etc.)

Medicaid Billing Stipends

The stipend for speech language pathologists with Medicaid-billable students on their caseload will increase from \$500 to \$750. Social workers and OT/PTs are now eligible for the stipend also.

2025 — 2026 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

Communications Chair

Sam Falk

Senior Building Representatives

ASM — A'Rehema Leach

BES — Christie Boydston

Noxon — TBA

VFES — Scott Adams &

Alison Durkin

OPS — Christene Way

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

AHS technology teacher Scott Cookinham is running for re-election to the Pleasant Valley Town Board. He is on the Republican and Conservative tickets.

AHS social studies teacher Brendan Lawler is running for re-election to the Dutchess County Legislature in the 4th district. He is on the Democratic and Working Parties tickets. Lawler has been endorsed by the Dutchess County Central Labor Council.

Union Vale Middle

Library Media Specialist Kate Sprague-Hicks helps Hope on a Mission (HOAM) every Thursday evening serving hot meals within the city of Poughkeepsie. HOAM is a street outreach ministry dedicated to restoring dignity to homeless and addicted individuals in Poughkeepsie and beyond. Through



Photo Courtesy by Colleen Napora

Retirees

On October 5, retirees Marisa Sutera Strange and Gary Montalto were inducted into the Dutchess County Sports Hall of Fame. Sutera Strange was inducted for her outstanding high school and college track and field achievements and success as an adult in the sport. Montalto was inducted for his "record-breaking career at Arlington High school, which included three state championships, and for his ranking as one of the top five winningest soccer coaches in New York State" (as written on his award plaque).

their consistent Pop-up Provisions events, they provide hot meals, clean clothing, personal hygiene items, and most importantly, love and grace. Their mission is to meet people where they are, building relationships and offering hope through genuine compassion. With the support of volunteers and the community, they are committed to making a lasting impact, one life at a time. For more information, visit hopeonamission.org.

Music Teacher Kristina Rizzo was chosen to participate in the 2025 Carnegie

Hall Music Educators Workshop which took place at the end of June. Music educators from all over the country took part in ensembles, workshops, composition, SEL, and technique classes. The theme of the entire workshop was JOY!. Participants were treated to a private tour of the Met, including the musical instrument gallery, concerts, and a private tour of Carnegie Hall. Rizzo encourages any ACSD music educators to apply next year.

Overlook Primary

On September 14, first grade teacher Damian Kortan volunteered and had his band, Damian Ecco Band, play a benefit concert for the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance for their "Wallkill Paddlefest" event on the Wallkill River in New Paltz. The event was to raise money and awareness towards maintaining a healthy and clean Wallkill River and its tributaries. Kortan played on the river's edge at the River-2-Ridge Trail, and about 40 boaters listened to the music from the water, and others enjoyed the show from land. A video of the performance is available on damianeccoband.com.



Photo Courtesy of Damian Kortan

For those interested in hearing the band's music, it is available on their website, and through Spotify and Apple Music. Their third album release celebration will be happening at The Lemon Squeeze in New Paltz on Black Friday, November 28, at 8:45 p.m.

Beekman Elementary

Photo Courtesy of Christina Gibson

Fifth grade teachers Christie Boydston, Rachel Perrone, and Christina Gibson (all pictured left) have started an outdoor recreation club for faculty at their school. According to Boydston, "We hike mostly in the Mohonk Preserve but have also ventured to other spots in Orange/Ulster/Dutchess county. We also kayak too! It's all about mental health and connecting with our colleagues!" Gibson adds, "We have nicknamed it 'Soul Steroids' and the big idea is connecting and doing things that light you up on the inside. The more the merrier to spur each other onto balance and also saying intentional 'yes' to the things that bring so much joy."

Volunteers Needed!

Help is appreciated for our annual Movie Morning on Saturday, October 25 at Hyde Park Roosevelt Cinemas. We are looking for volunteers to set up, sell raffle tickets, and greet guests from 9 to 10a.m. 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!

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>



Dates to Remember



NOVEMBER

4th—**Election Day**

Superintendent's Conference Day

5th—NYSTRS Presentation, 4 p.m., AHS LGI

11th—No School—Veterans' Day

14th—Elementary Half Day

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

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

26-28th—No School—Thanksgiving



DECEMBER

3rd—ATA Children's Holiday Party, 5 - 7 p.m., VF (Snow date 12/5)

8-11th—Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences (dates vary by school)

9th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO

24-31th—No School—Winter Recess



Announcements

Would you like to know more about NYSTRS and retirement?

A NYSTRS representative will be visiting AHS from 4-5pm in the LGI on November 5
Highlights of the presentation include a review of the fundamental pension components such as service credit and final average salary, key retirement thresholds to reach, the tools needed to maximize these benefits, retirement benefit options, and much more. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

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