



# THE EDUCATOR

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## Support Your Schools On May 20

This year's school budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 20. The ballot will also include a bus and equipment proposition, a capital reserve fund 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 20th. Make sure to tell them why passage of the budget and the propositions is 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. The ATA supports the three candidates who are running unopposed: incumbents Jennifer Boye and Marion Quinn, and newcomer Brian Arnold.

To the right and below you will find some facts to help you inform others about the 2025–2026 Arlington school budget and propositions. More information about these items can be found at [arlingtonschools.org](http://arlingtonschools.org).

Every vote counts!

### BUDGET FACTS

- A 2.74% tax levy increase is proposed, which is below the allowable 3.38% cap. This is the 14th consecutive year that Arlington's budget has been below the cap.
- If the budget fails twice, a contingency budget must be adopted, meaning that an additional \$4.28 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.

Visit [arlingtonschools.org](http://arlingtonschools.org) for more information

### Bus and Equipment Proposition

Taxpayers are asked to permit the district to purchase new buses, vans, a truck, and a generator at a local share of \$994,840, bonded over five years. The district maintains a schedule for bus 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.

### Capital Reserve Fund Proposition

The District is seeking approval to use funds already set aside in its capital reserve fund to replace the air conditioning in the AHS auditorium, and upgrade the football field lights to support energy-efficient and cost-effective bulbs. This proposition also includes vital projects at several other schools within the district, all funded through these dedicated reserve funds with a 0% impact on taxes.

### ARLINGTON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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## Trivia Challenge

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

**When was the name “Memorial Day” officially adopted for the federal holiday in May?**

Last month’s winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was Elaine LiVeli from LMS. She knew that we became the Arlington Central School District in **1951**. She will be the proud owner of ATA gear. Answer this month’s question and you could win ATA gear

Submit your answer to the above trivia question to [sfalk@acsdny.org](mailto:sfalk@acsdny.org) by **May 30**. The winner will be randomly selected from the correct submissions.

## PR Update: Generosity Abounds

The Arlington Teachers’ Association’s members have been out in full-force, first doing all the amazing work they do in the classroom, and then getting out into the community to continue their magic. We are so proud to sponsor the following events and organizations right here in our own neighborhoods: the Jackie Higgins Memorial pet drive, Arlington Education Foundation’s 5K, the Hudson Valley Rebuilding Together Day, and Literacy Connection’s annual spelling bee.

Collectively, members of the ATA raised over \$400 and absolutely FILLED my car with supplies for our furry friends at C.A.R.E. of HV. We have been annual donors to the AEF’s 5K, where many of our own members took place as participants in the day’s events. That same weekend, the Rebuilding Together of the Hudson Valley also had their build date. Unlike previous years where our union members rolled up their sleeves and

worked on home improvement projects for our neighbors, this year’s build required licensed professionals to get the home back to safe conditions, so we only donated money towards that rebuild. Two Arlington High School English teachers, Tina Tamweber and Darcy Soi took a team of ATA-sponsored students to perform in Literacy Connection’s annual spelling bee. According to their website, “Literacy Connections is a charitable organization devoted to providing basic literacy education for adults, and literacy support and enrichment for children.” We are thrilled to be a part of all these efforts!

As the school year starts to wrap up, there’s still one more fantastic opportunity to join the Arlington Teachers’ Association in making our shared spaces a little bit better. The ATA is committed to keeping our local roads looking their best, and that includes our

semi-annual cleanup along Route 55 by the high school. It’s a great way to get some fresh air, connect with fellow volunteers, and take pride in the area around us.

Mark your calendars! Our next highway cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, at 9am. We’ll be meeting in the parking lot at Arlington High School to get organized before we head out. If you’re interested in lending a hand and helping us keep the roads we use beautiful, please reach out to Regina Godfrey at [rgodfrey@acsdny.org](mailto:rgodfrey@acsdny.org) to sign up. Let’s finish the year strong by showing our spirit for the place we live and work!

Thank you for all your efforts in and out of the classroom. Our community is better off because of each and every one of you, and your active commitment to bettering the world around you.

-Kristine Jackson  
ATA PR Chair

## Come to the 2025 Recognition Dinner!

On Friday, June 13, the ATA will hold its annual recognition dinner/dance. The evening provides an opportunity to recognize and say goodbye to those who have decided to retire and celebrate those who have received tenure. The event takes place at Christos Restaurant in Poughkeepsie starting at 6:30 pm. The cost is \$80.00 per person, which includes hors d’oeuvres, dinner, and a cash bar. To purchase tickets, contact Steve Hertzog at AHS.

**New Members--  
Scan the QR Code for a chance  
to win two free tickets!**

(You must be within your first four years at Arlington to enter.)



# NYSUT Delegates Gather In Rochester

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 example, there is a committee dedicated to human and civil rights that wrote resolutions to encourage NYSUT to support the LGBTQ+ community. Though legally protected in New York, the lack of support at the federal level creates an urgent need everywhere. 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. The theme of the 2025 RA was "Equality, Progress and Play". Part of the Friday evening program included a private event for the NYSUT delegates at the Strong Museum of Play which is an amazing facility for the young and "young at heart" alike.

To add variety to the program, the second component of the RA includes 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 fired-up the crowd included AFT President Randi Weingarten, NEA President Becky Pringle, and NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento. Absent from the list of speakers this year was Governor Kathy Hochul.

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. Returning APPR to local control and beginning to restructure retirement Tier 6 were among the many gains that NYSUT is proud of accomplishing in 2024, and the work continues. NYSUT awards several "Member of the Year" awards to teachers, school related professionals, healthcare workers, retirees, and more of the groups that NYSUT represents.

Representing the ATA at the Joseph A Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center on Friday May 2 and Saturday May 3 were ATA President Bob Maier, Communications Chair Sam Falk, Treasurer Dave Cordella and VP For Membership Steve Hertzog. There were about 1500 total delegates from all of the local unions in New York State. The convention starts on Thursday for presidents with special meetings and programming for local leaders followed by the general sessions for the rest of the delegates from each local on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday. The RA



Photo by Steve Hertzog

ATA Communications Chair Sam Falk (left), Treasurer Dave Cordella (center), and VP For Membership Steve Hertzog attended the NYSUT RA.



Photo by Sam Falk

Over 1500 delegates gathered in Rochester for this year's NYSUT RA.

remains a valuable opportunity for our members to network and get updated on what is going on statewide. Any members interested in attending the RA as a delegate should contact Hertzog, Falk, or Cordella to find out how to get involved.

For further reading on the details of this year's RA go to <https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources/sites/representative-assembly>.

-Steve Hertzog  
ATA VP For Membership



# Classroom Collaboration Benefits All

With the district's emphasis on PLCs, collaboration within the grade and subject levels in our buildings happens all the time,



Photo by Liz Crivello-Jordan

**Students in Liz Crivello-Jordan's fourth grade class measure the height of Kim Wright's kindergartners as part of a math activity at Beekman Elementary.**

but some ATA members have gone beyond that to connect their classroom with one that is not in the realm of their PLC. The following are just a few examples of the ways that ATA members have paired their students with those in another classroom, to the benefit of everyone involved.

At Beekman Elementary all of the primary-level classes have a "buddy" at the intermediate level. According to fourth grade teacher Liz Crivello-Jordan, the buddy program has been a

part of Beekman at least since she started there in 2000. Her class recently worked with kindergarten teacher Kim Wright's on a math lesson that involved students' heights.

Along with academics, Beekman's buddy program also helps students with social skills. First grade teacher Caroline Ferreri shares, "My class got together with our buddies recently to have a game day afternoon. It was awesome! The big buddies brought in games to share from home, and taught their little buddies how to play. Some opted to draw together, or build with Legos."

At Overlook, the collaboration between Shannon Venditto's kindergartners and Crystal Sanchez's second grade class started several years ago when Sanchez invited Venditto's students to watch her class release butterflies that they had raised. "From there, we have tried to meet monthly to build relationships between K and second grade students through buddy reading and other projects (Gingerbread houses are a favorite!)," says Venditto. "Kindergartners enjoy showing second graders the reading strategies that they have been learning and second graders are there to assist, as well as read books from their book bins. Kindergarten students love asking questions, especially with non-fiction books. We've also taken gallery walks in their room to learn about a variety of science topics. It's wonder-

ful to watch the interactions and see how students are helping each other and sharing materials. Half of my class goes to her room and she sends half to my room."

Another science collaboration effort that has been going on since 2012 is the Teaching Science initiative that physics teacher Marc Ouimet has spearheaded at AHS. When the district built a room at the high school that was supposed to be staffed with a dedicated K-8 science specialist, but then didn't make that happen, Ouimet stepped in and created a class where high school students would teach hands-on science lessons to elementary school visitors. In that first year 35 elementary classes participated; this year it will be 120. Ouimet says, "Although it can be a lot of work, it is a lot of fun. I get to build great relationships with the students because I treat them as equals when we are teaching. They are in charge and are part of the decision making process. To a degree we are more like colleagues. I love getting to see the excitement on the younger kids' faces. It reminds me of what we all thought teaching would be like - the excitement, amazement, and wonder. I also enjoy catching up with colleagues and hearing about their experiences in the classroom."

At Vail Farm, Jon Nix and Michael Barley recently implemented a Science of Reading Buddy Program during AIS time to assist first grade students needing

additional reading support. For them, it was an opportunity to put into practice many of the ideas from their recently completed Science of Reading in-service class. Barley reports that his fifth grade volunteers eagerly look forward to helping approaching readers in Nix's first grade classroom. His students can bond with and support beginning readers, while Nix's students get to practice the phonics skills they are learning.

At AHS, social studies teacher Erica Wolff is also helping students in younger grades with their reading and writing skills through a pen pal program. She started it with her own daughter's first grade class at Overlook four years ago, and continues today, managing connections with four classes at both OPS and Titusville. She doesn't have a specific high school class that participates, but invites both current and former students to join through

Google Classroom. According to Wolff, "What's amazing to see is the growth in writing and how much they get to know one another no matter the grade level. Every year we start with the same format 'Hi, my name is \_ and I'm excited to be your pen pal. What was one fun thing you did over the summer?' and then at that point the topics of discussion take off! They really do get to know each other in a very sweet way. Each spring we

hold a pen pal reunion/celebration at both Overlook and Titusville so the pen pals can meet in person and enjoy some snacks and

titusville and Vail Farm by exchanging artwork throughout the year. At the end of April Buhler's Studio in Art class hosted an art



Photo courtesy of Michael Barley

juice boxes. It's something small but I know the 'big kids' love it as much as the elementary students." Euni Shim, whose second grade class at Overlook participates, says that, "It's been a beautiful collaborative effort to encourage our reluctant and struggling writ-

carnival for the younger students with art activities and games they have designed to encourage creative expression across different age groups. For Buhler, this is a way to increase engagement and give her students the opportunity to be role models.

***"I love getting to see the excitement on the younger kids' faces. It reminds me of what we all thought teaching would be like - the excitement, amazement, and wonder."***

***-Marc Ouimet, AHS***

ers with role model students!"

Another collaboration between high school and elementary schools that runs in a similar way is the smArt Pals program started by AHS art teacher Amanda Buhler. Her students connect with classes at Ti-

school, to the UVMS eighth grade team hosting a *Polar Express* event for Vail Farm students. All are great examples of ATA members going above and beyond to plan experiences that not only benefit their own students, but others as well.

**One of Michael Barley's fifth grade students helps Jon Nix's first grade students with reading at Vail Farm Elementary.**



## 2024 — 2025 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— Lynette Battle

VFES— Alison Durkin

OPS — Christene Way

Traver — 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](mailto: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 received a grant from the AHS PTSA to help with a culminating project for her Life Skills students. Over the last two years the students have been studying other countries and cultures, and on May 1 they held a cultural fair for the school. Grant money allowed for the purchase of things like food, clothes, and cultural artifacts.

For the fourth time, English teacher Michael Reiter participated in the annual ACPT -- American Crossword Puzzle Tournament on April 5th and 6th. Directed by New York Times Crossword Puzzle Editor Will Shortz, this is the nation's oldest and largest crossword competition. Solvers tackle eight original crosswords created and edited specially for this event. Scoring is based on accuracy and speed. He did not win any



Photo by Regina Godfrey

## Arlington High

On April 27, social studies teachers Regina Godfrey and Ellen McCutcheon (retired) ran the 9/11 Memorial and Museum 5K. The funds raised help to fulfill the collective promise to never forget, while continuing to grow the educational programs for future generations. They aim for all to understand the history, lessons and ongoing impact of 9/11. Race registration includes a complimentary ticket to the museum and, according to Godfrey, the setting couldn't have been more perfect.

prizes, but had a great time with his sister, friends, and people from all over the country and the world. He also got to talk to Will Shortz.

## Arlington PE

ASM PE teacher Christopher Keenan was the chairperson for the South-eastern Zone Elementary/Middle School Leadership Award Ceremony that was held at Arlington High School on Saturday May 3. PE teachers Steve Ciancio (OPS), Frank Sanzo (ASM), Tim Murphy

(JDWR), Elena Farlow (TRP), and Dave Ostrand-er (BES) also participated.

## Beekman Elementary

Music teacher Leanne Sowul (also at VF) is a co-editor of a literary magazine for flash creative nonfiction (under 500 words) that she and her writing group started in January 2025. *In a Flash* publishes one piece of excellent flash, written to theme, each month. The writer of the piece is celebrated with editorial

See Great on page 7

# Librarians Visit NYC's Schomburg Center

During the March 7th conference day, Arlington librarians Lucy Miller (AHS), Jaclyn Heeney (AHS), Rachael Klein (LMS), Kate Sprague-Hicks (UVMS) and Donna Phillips (TRP) got on an early morning train to 125th Street. Their destination was The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. The Center, a branch of The New York Public Library currently celebrating its 100th anniversary, started with the personal collection of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, a distinguished Puerto Rican-born Black scholar and

bibliophile. Today's Schomburg Center is one of the world's leading cultural institutions devoted to the preservation and study of materials focused on African American, African Diasporic, and African experiences. In the tradition of its namesake, its wide-ranging collections illuminate the richness of global Black history, arts, and culture. Our tour was led by a knowledgeable and engaging docent who provided us with an extensive introduction to the Center's resources, archives, exhibitions, and collections. Our trip deepened our

understanding of Black history and culture, stimulated important conversations around equity and inclusion, and provided fresh ideas for building culturally responsive collections in our school libraries.

Extensive curriculum guides & teaching tools for using the Schomburg's digital archives are available at <https://www.nypl.org/spotlight/center-for-educators/primary-sources/schomburg>.

-Kate Sprague-Hicks, UVMS

## Hertzog Goes To Miami

AHS science teacher Steve Hertzog had the opportunity to attend a conference on April 8-10 as an extension of the summer research program he participated in called BIORETS (Biological Research Experience for Teachers). Hosted by Florida International University's International Center for Tropical Botany at the Kampong in Miami, the conference brought together the researchers and some of the teachers who participated in the program to discuss the experiences, strengths, and areas in need of improvement for this National Science Foundation (NSF) funded program. The awe-inspiring Kampong is the only site of the National Tropical Botanical Gardens on the US mainland, nestled in a historic prop-

erty in Miami's Coconut Grove neighborhood which was once owned by the daughters of Alexander Graham Bell, as well as famous botanist Dr. David Fairchild who is credited with introducing thousands of plants into modern American Culture.

Steve participated in several panels and working groups with teachers and researchers from several continental states and places as far as Puerto Rico and Hawaii. The goals of the program were to try to find ways to make federal stakeholders aware of the value of the BIORETS program in building future STEM careers for our students and forming a better decision making society through science literacy. BIORETS investigators are unsure of the future of NSF fund-

ing for the program, and need to be able to present a case to the NSF or other potential funding organizations to keep the program going. Hertzog helped by providing the perspective of a classroom teacher who was positively impacted by his experience of a six week intensive summer program and school year follow up sessions with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, our local BIORETS site. A description of this experience was featured in the September 2024 Educator. Secondary science teachers interested in learning more about the BIORETS program are welcomed to reach out to Steve Hertzog ([shertzog@acsdny.org](mailto:shertzog@acsdny.org)) or visit the Cary Institute website under the Eco-Inquiry menu.

## ATA Members Do Great Things

*Continued from page 6*  
praise, an author Q&A, and a small honorarium. You can submit and subscribe to *In a Flash* on Substack at <https://inaflashlitmag.substack.com/>.

### UVMS

PE teacher Ryan Sonne recently played the role of Mr. March in a staged

reading of *Little Women* with White Pond Community Theater/Pied Piper in Carmel. His father-in-law and son were also in the production. Last year Sonne was also involved with a staged reading of *Our Town* with the same company.

### The Mommy Dash 5K

On April 27 several ATA members

participated in a 5K in the memory of Terry D'Amato, former AHS secretary. A portion of the proceeds go to a scholarship in her name. Participants included Beth Maier, Tricia Muraco, Tina Tamwebber, and Paige VanTassell (AHS), Steve Ciancio (OPS), and retiree Liz Sawicki.

# Dates to Remember



## MAY

- 13th—ATA Executive Council Meeting, 4 p.m., AHS Room 1432  
Board of Education Meeting: 7 p.m., ASM
- 16th—PD Half Day
- 20th—**School Budget Vote and School Board Election**
- 22-27th—Memorial Day Weekend—No School
- 27th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO

## JUNE

- 6th—Elementary School Half Day
- 10-11th—Regents Exam Day at AHS—No Classes
- 10th—Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., AHS
- 13th—ATA Recognition Dinner, 6:30 p.m., Christos
- 16th—Last Day of Classes, AHS
- 17th—ATA Executive Council Session, 4 p.m., AHS room 1432
- 19th—Juneteenth—No School
- 24th—Last Day of Classes, Elementary (Half Day)  
Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m., CAO
- 25th—Last Day of Classes, Middle School (Half Day)
- 26th—Last Day of School For Faculty
- 27th—High School Graduation, 7 p.m., Heritage Financial Park



# Announcements

## 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>



Stay informed! Follow us on

Facebook and Twitter or check out

[www.arlingtonteachers.com](http://www.arlingtonteachers.com) for

forms, photos, calendars, and more.