



# THE EDUCATOR

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## Looking Back and Moving Forward

Sitting down to work on this newsletter, I couldn't decide what to write about on the front page, so I took a look back at past June headlines. We've been through a lot!

In June 2011, "A Year Of Changes Comes To An End" reflected on the introduction of PLCs, APPR, and even the tax cap. In June 2013 we rallied in Albany against Race To the Top and the standardized testing industry. June 2014 brought the closing of AMS. June 2016's headline was "Relaxation, Recuperation, Registration", as the new protocols for maintaining certification were starting that July.

Finally, in June 2017, the headline was "A Year Of Relative Calm Comes To An End". We had a new contract without protracted negotiations,

and even the same superintendent for a few years in a row. But then in 2018's "Survey Says", the district's first engagement survey and the lack of trust and respect between buildings and CAO were discussed. (That one got

*It's been a pretty good year, hasn't it? Despite the tumult in the country, and the world, at Arlington, there's a sense of hope for the future of our district.*

me a very displeased email from the superintendent.)

Fast forward through the COVID years and a few more superintendents (not to mention a survey of our own in 2023), and here we are. It's been a pretty good year, hasn't it? Despite the tumult in the country and the world, at Arlington, there's a sense of

hope for the future of our district.

The main reason for that is that we're always there for each other. At last night's recognition dinner several retirees reflected on how their colleagues have been a family

to them. We have stuck together through all of the changes described here (and many more), and, now, we also have leadership at CAO who seem to respect and value us.

As we head into summer break, we will take much-needed time to relax and recuperate. Yes, next September will again bring the hecticness of a life in education, but there is reason to be hopeful that we have entered an era of good feelings at Arlington.

Have a good summer!

-Sam Falk,  
ATA Communications Chair



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## Trivia Challenge

Last month's winner, selected at random from among the correct responses received, was **Rayna Denning** from JDWR. She correctly identified **1967** as the year the name "Memorial Day" was officially adopted for the federal holiday in May.

Be sure to look for the next trivia challenge in September and you could win ATA gear too!

## Welfare Trustees Update Coverage

The Welfare Trust Trustees recently met and voted on the following changes:

### Changes to Dental Provider Network

**Effective July 1, 2025, Dental Arts of the Hudson Valley will no longer be a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) dentist for the Welfare Trust.**

Members can still receive dental care at this practice, but the payment process will change. Members will pay for services at the time of treatment and then submit receipts for reimbursement according to our Fee Schedule rates. Reimbursement payments will be made directly to the member. Those who wish to switch dentists can find our Provider List at [arlingtonteachers.com](http://arlingtonteachers.com) (on the Links & Forms page).

This change was made to ensure the financial sustainability of the Welfare Trust after several reports of overbilling and concerning patterns of billing were discovered. As a self-funded organization, we must carefully manage costs to protect benefits for all members.

The Trustees are also reviewing billing patterns from other high-cost providers to ensure responsible stewardship of Welfare Trust resources.

### New Age Limits for Dependent Coverage

**All child dependents enrolled in COBRA will now lose coverage on the last day of the month they turn 26 years old.** Student dependents of active members will also now have coverage until age 26 (previously 25).

This aligns with Affordable Care Act standards and provides consistency across all dependent coverage policies. Current COBRA members affected by this change will receive individual notices. Surviving spouses of deceased members who receive COBRA benefits will not be impacted by this change.

*For questions, contact Bob Maier or Cait Quinn at the ATA Office (845-454-7002 or [ata4547002@aol.com](mailto:ata4547002@aol.com)). The Trustees remain committed to maintaining sustainable, quality benefits for all members.*

## Office Beautification Help Needed

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. Weather permitting, we will meet at 8 am 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](#)



# Fix Tier Six!



**For more information, visit [FixTier6.org](https://www.fixtier6.org)**

The New York State Teachers' Retirement System and the New York State and Local Retirement System, which represents most school-related professionals, has six retirement tiers. Your tier membership is based on your hiring date. If you were hired on or after April 1, 2012, you're in Tier 6. Tier 6 requires public employees to work until age 63, up to 40 years, in order to retire without penalty.

Through NYSUT's advocacy, in 2024 the number of years required to vest in the pension system for Tier 6 members was reduced from 10 years to five years — the same amount required for Tier 4. As a result of that, more than 85,000 Tier 6 members became vested.

The fight continues. As part of their campaign to Fix Tier 6, NYSUT organized rallies across the state on the sixth of each month, the last

one being on 6/6 at the Walkway Over the Hudson. Despite a delayed start due to a strong thunderstorm, more than 500 union members from the Hudson Valley marched across the bridge from both sides and met in the middle to hear inspirational speeches from local union members, NYSUT President Melinda Person, and members of the NY State government who support the cause.



# Retirees Say Goodbye

The ATA's annual recognition dinner was held on Friday, June 13, at Christos in Poughkeepsie. This year's retirees and tenure recipients were honored with heartfelt speeches, dinner, and dancing. Many more photos of the event can be found at [www.arlingtonteachers.com](http://www.arlingtonteachers.com).







Photos by Lara Ivchenko

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

## Congratulations To the 2025 ATA Retirees!

**Barbara Amyotte - TRP**

**Laura Bryant - LMS**

**Kimberly Conn - LMS**

**Elizabeth Coppola - JDWR**

**Lisa Greco - AHS**

**Rhonda Griffin-Brickhouse - OPS**

**Richard Jakob - UVMS**

**Gwen Moschetto - VF**

**Mark Neustadt - AHS**

**Edward O'Connor - UVMS**

**Lisa Otis - VF**

**Luisa Paone - UVMS**

**Lisa Peterson - AHS**

**Jayne Pugnali - OPS**

**Eloise Samson - LMS**

**Gerard Sheedy - AHS**

**Elaine Tellerday - TRP**

**Janet Will - VF**



## 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 School

Social studies teacher Kathy Bellino recently received the Westchester Lower Hudson Valley Council for the Social Studies (WLHCSS) Outstanding Social Studies Supervisor Award. She was recognized in a ceremony on May 21 at Reid Castle on Manhattanville College's campus.

Social studies teacher Jim Lillis is working on building sets for two theater companies this spring. *What the Constitution Means To Me* opens on July 5 at the Rivertowns Playhouse in Irvington, and *She's Not Male, A Transgender Odyssey*, will be performed in Asbury Park on June 19.

School psychologist Mary Beth Neils is an AFAA-certified personal trainer and instructor. She will be leading a summer boot camp at the Town Center Park in



Photo courtesy of Matthew Zydel

### Titusville Intermediate

This June, music teacher Matthew Zydel was added to the Iroquois High School Music Hall of Fame. Zydel's alma mater created the award in 2016 to highlight the accomplishments of Iroquois alumni who have gone on to successful careers in the field of music and display positive citizenship and quality of character.

Beekman on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from July 1 through 24. To sign up for the 7 or 8am session, contact Neils at [fitpsych50@gmail.com](mailto:fitpsych50@gmail.com). The cost is \$99. She will also be running classes through Arlington's continuing education program. More information about those is at [arlingtonschools.revtrak.net](http://arlingtonschools.revtrak.net).

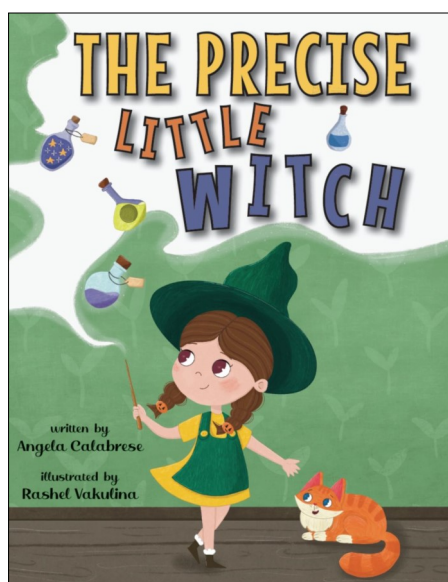
### Beekman Elementary

First grade special education teacher Megan Kane, 3rd grade teacher Rachel Shields, and 4th grade special education teacher Anya Tomaszeski took their Girls On the Run club members to compete at the Girls On the Run 5K race at the Legoland New York Resort in Goshen on June 8.



# Retiree Author Offers Advice

Although AMS reading teacher Angela Calabrese has been retired since 2014, her students are still on her mind. Thinking about how it was often difficult to find books to captivate her reluctant readers, Calabrese decided to write her own stories. *Year of the Meatball*, her debut middle grade novel, launched in February of this year, and her first picture book, *The Precise Little Witch*, will be released in August.



The road to being a published author was no easy task, taking hours of research and a careful study of the market. Calabrese offers the following advice to aspiring children's writers:

- Read LOTS of books in the genre you're writing in, be it picture books, middle grade novels or early readers.
- Attend writer's conferences. Oftentimes, there are submission opportunities from the editors if you were an attendee, even if you don't have an agent. CWHV (Children's Writers of the Hudson Valley) is our local writer's group that organizes wonderful conferences every year. The next one will be held on November 8. They'll be posting details soon at [www.cwhv.org](http://www.cwhv.org).
- Join SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators). They are an organization that helps novice and seasoned writers improve their craft and network with other creatives. More information is at [www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org).
- Learn early on that rejections are a part of your writing journey. I could have wallpapered my family room with the amount of rejections I've received. If an agent or editor gives you some constructive feedback, that's considered gold. Consider their suggestions and if they resonate with you, revise accordingly.
- When your book is ready to find a home, study each publishing house's guidelines and follow them exactly. If they don't accept unagented



Photo courtesy of Angela Calabrese

**2014 ATA retiree Angela Calabrese recently became a published author.**

submissions, don't send your story unless you have an agent. Try to find an acquiring editor there and personalize your query letter to them (a query letter is a concise letter used by writers to pitch their book). If they only want to see the first five pages of your middle grade novel, don't send them 10. Show you are professional and capable of following instructions accurately.

- Don't give up. The kidlit world is a subjective industry. If you decided to call it quits after sending your story out to 49 places, who knows if the 50th one would have said YES?

Calabrese is excited to be visiting classrooms in the fall to talk about her books: "Don't be surprised if you see me roaming your school's hallway sporting a baseball cap or witch's hat!" More information about Calabrese and her books can be found at [www.angelacalabrese.com](http://www.angelacalabrese.com).



# Dates to Remember



## JUNE

24th—Last Day of Class (Half Day), Elementary Schools

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

25th—Last Day of Class (Half Day), Middle Schools

26th—Last Day of School

27th—High School Graduation, Heritage Financial Park, 7 p.m.

28th—Rain date—High School Graduation, Heritage Financial Park, 7 p.m.



## JULY

8th—Board of Education Reorganization Meeting, 5 p.m., CAO

## 2025-2026 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SCHEDULE



September 16

November 18

January 20

March 17

May 19

October 21

December (no meeting)

February 24

April 21

June 16



# Announcements

***Thank you to the Communications Committee members in each building who helped to spread good news about what ATA members do! Your efforts help to make this big district more connected.***

**Like us on Facebook or Twitter or check out [www.arlingonteachers.com](http://www.arlingonteachers.com) for forms, photos, calendars, and more.**

Anyone interested in learning more about National Board Certification should reach out to Stefanie Rice or Colleen Napora at AHS. They will be running a monthly candidate support group.

### Summer Hours

***The ATA officers are still there for members over the summer. While the office will not be physically open, President Bob Maier checks the ATA's email and voicemail a few times a week in July and August. Messages can be left at 845-454-7002 or [ata4547002@aol.com](mailto:ata4547002@aol.com).***