

Are You Missing Out?

Have you wondered why some of your colleagues seem more informed about the union and what's going on in the District? It's simple...they've requested that their e-mail addresses be included in the STA's listserve.

If you would like to be included on the STA listserve and need an e-mail account (assuming you have access to the Internet), just go to www.yahoo.com and click on "check e-mail". You can set up a free e-mail account with your own password and check your mail from any location. That means if your enjoying your summer in Florida you can check your e-mail from there. Maybe your vacationing in Europe...still you can check for mail.

Please drop us a note, or phone us at x4526 if you'd like to be included on the listserve (this is assuming you have set up an e-mail account). If you have any questions as to the process, please give us a call and we'll be glad to assist you.

Did You Know...

Check out the following: www.nysut.org/syracuse. That's right...STA's website is growing. There's a great deal of usual information on the site and we're improving on it every week. If there is an idea or suggestion you might want to share with us and the other members, please feel free to e-mail those listed on the site or call the STA office at 435-4526.

AFL-CIO Scholarship

The NYS AFL-CIO will award a four-year scholarship to a 2002 graduating high school senior who intends to pursue a career in labor relations or labor related interest such as history, economics, law, political science, sociology or journalism. The scholarship will be for \$2,000 a year for four consecutive years for a total of \$8,000. Deadline is May 15.

Call STA for an application x4526.

Hillary Visits Hughes Magnet

Senator **Hillary Rodham Clinton's** swing across upstate New York on January 14, 2002 included a visit to Hughes Magnet School. The school community was thrilled to have her visit their classrooms and address a representative group of students, parents and staff. Her visit followed the passage of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) commonly referred to as Title I. The new record funding levels mandated in the reauthorization bill should mean a significant increase to the Syracuse City School District.



Kate McKenna, Linda Mulvey, Bonnie Nash, Debbie Moriarty, Theresa Harper, Senator Clinton, Marie Whelan, Amy McMains, Stephen Jones, Anne Sykes, Craig Martin and Wayne O'Connor met with Senator Clinton prior to the student assembly.



Students David Skipp and Tashira Scott presented Senator Clinton with a bouquet of flowers from the school.

senator met with a team of union leaders, teachers, administrators, area legislators and school board members to hear our concerns for our children and of our need for continued support in the Congress. Participants also shared information about the labor/management partnership developing around AFT's and New York City's UFT "Professional Development for Facilitating the Redesign of Low Performing Schools."

Senator Clinton took time to greet people throughout the building, posing with individuals and groups of admirers with her characteristic enthusiasm and warmth. All are anxious for her to make Hughes a regular stop on her visits to Syracuse.

--McKenna



Kate McKenna and Jay Guss displaying the award....

See side-bar on front page (right side) for the story.

Computerized IEP's

The SCSD is in the process of setting up a new student information system. This computer system will have greater capabilities for teachers to input information directly into the computer system, including inputting information for special needs student on their IEPs. However, this system will not be fully functional for at least a year.

In the meantime, the SCSD has informed us that they now have a disc available for teachers/therapists who want to work on IEPs on the computer. This disc gives teachers a template to type in student information onto the disc. If you are interested in receiving a disc/training, contact **Nikki Slatter** at x5808.

Accolades Galore

It was like "pulling" teeth to get **Jay Guss**, a teacher at McKinley Brighton, to share the following information with us. Although some of you may have read about the honors bestowed upon Jay, we felt the need to make sure all of our members were informed and to the say... *Thank you Jay...you're a credit to the Syracuse City School District and to the community!*

Hank Boynton Award Red Cross Real Heroes Award

Syracuse Fire Chief John Cowin said at the awards ceremony, "We can't measure the importance of the job these people do. We can't measure their success; we can only assume it's phenomenal. When we give a firefighter a medal, it usually means he saved maybe 10 people. These recipients may have saved thousands with their work. Maybe they deserve a hundred medals."

Jay runs the fire prevention education program for the Solvay School District.

Inside...

- Unit 8 • FYI • Next Installment
- LRS Update
- "Food for Thought"
- Community News
- Personal Profile
- "Health Beat"



Standards for Teacher Evaluation

An Update

When we think of standards, rubrics and assessment we usually think in terms of our students or programs rather than our own professional evaluation. The State Education Department mandate to all districts to examine their teacher evaluation practices and procedures- called the Annual Professional Performance Review or APPR- was the beginning of what has become a two year process. Our district committee, composed of teachers, administrators, parents and members of the higher education community as mandated by the state, met for the

first time in the fall of 2000 with **Dr. Patricia Hall** and me as facilitators.

Our task was to examine our current system and, if necessary, redesign those elements that needed updating, including being certain that the 8 elements (student development, content knowledge, preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, student assessment, collaboration and reflective and responsive practice) identified by the state were included in whatever our final product was. Over that fall and winter the APPR committee met twice a month, dedicating hours to the process. Our main priorities centered around three areas: examining our current Model for Teacher Evaluation; using current research to identify authentic evaluation criteria and methods; and determining what our staff (teacher and administrator) development needs would be to introduce and support any changes in the current system.

The APPR committee made a recommendation to the Board of Education last spring. This report was adopted as policy and the work of negotiating possible changes began. We now have a draft document that was presented jointly by Dr. Hall and teacher members of the negotiating team to our building representatives at STA's January Representative Assembly. Another revision will be presented in February for their consideration and to stimulate discussion at the building level. Next, teams of teachers and administrators will begin conducting "cluster school meetings" to gain more feedback from you, the members, and to answer any questions that they can. Additionally, Dr. Hall and I will be preparing a short video to be shown during the March superintendent's conference day. We hope that this team modeling will set the stage for a collaborative process in evaluation.

Clear, more objective criteria is in the process.

You will see from the DRAFT that there are now 9 elements (the State's 8 and 1 recommended by the committee- professional qualities) contained in 3 main domains: Planning and Designing Instruction; Instruction; and Professional Responsibilities. All elements have specific criteria that identify both frequency and dimension descriptors for each skill. So, an element will have a statement about how often and with what skill an element is being demonstrated. The purpose of this is to eliminate the guessing about what's good or effective practice.

--McKenna

Looking for Something To Do On Friday, March 8th?

How about an evening of information, networking, and fun with your professional colleagues from around Central New York? The place to be is NYSUT's Central New York Educational Conference at the OnCenter. From 3:00 until 5:00, stroll through the fine exhibits of local Teacher Centers, Retirees, NYSUT's Effective Teaching Program and many more, as you enjoy a wine and cheese reception. Then participate in one of six informative workshops - there's truly something for everyone! Dinner, keynote speaker, author **Bruce Coville**, and doorprizes will follow the workshops.

Bullies and Bullying, National Board Certification, Differentiated Instruction, Are You Ready for Retirement?, Study Skills and Classroom Partners are the workshops being offered.

Conference information and registration forms can be found in your school office. If you have any questions please call 431-4040.



Nancy Peluso, President
Salem Hyde x4570

DIRECTOR-EXECUTIVE BOARD

As 4th Vice President of STA's Executive Board I want to welcome Rita Fredette (TA-Shea) to her newly elected position of Director for Unit 8 on the Executive Board. Rita's experience, skills and perspective will enhance our unit's representation on the Board....WELCOME, RITA!

SWAP SHOP

Need fresh ideas? Maybe you have an idea to share? We have decided to include a "Swap Shop of Ideas" to our general membership meetings. I always think of craft projects, but we need other ideas too, such as math games, science experiments etc. Please plan to attend the general meetings on March 5 and May 7. Bring an idea to share and take an idea back to your school.

DIRECTIONS FOR SUBSTITUTE TIME CARDS

The pay rates are: 2-3 1/4 hours (1/2 day) \$13.50
Over 3 1/4 hours (full day) \$ 27.00

When you substitute for 1/2 day it is wise to write the exact hours on the card rather than indicating AM or PM. For example "8:30 to 1:00" not "AM". Additionally if subbing time includes the hours between 10:30 and 1:00, a half hour lunch is deducted from the total hours of subbing. "No lunch" must be indicated if your subbing time is between these hours and a lunch was not taken. This is important because sometimes it could mean the difference between 1/2 day or full day subbing stipend.

F Y I

Mark Your Calendars

February

13 - Representative Assembly - STA - 3:30 p.m.
18-22 February Break - enjoy!!
26 - Unit 8 Executive Board - STA - 3:30 p.m.

March

4 - STA Executive Board - 3:45 p.m.
5 - Unit 8 General Membership Meeting - 3:30 p.m.
6 - Unit 10 General
7 - New York State Employees Retirement System Seminar - STA - 6:00 p.m.
12 - Unit 7 Executive Board - STA - 2:30 p.m.
13 - Representative Assembly - STA - 3:30 p.m.
19 - Unit 7 General Membership - STA - 2:30 p.m.
25 - STA Executive Board - STA 3:45 p.m.

Free

- The year 2002 is a Palindrome.
So is Otto, Radar, and Eve.

We have a free classroom unit on Palindrome's to the first 50 teachers who call STA at 435-4526.

- Get Ready for May!
4th Grade Logic Packets are also available at the STA to the first 50 callers.



Attention Teachers!

Are you interested in teaching 8-13 year olds in a fun and enthusiastic atmosphere? We're looking for highly motivated individuals to teach exciting COLLEGE FOR KIDS classes for one or more weeks during the summer of 2002 at Onondaga Community College.

Our COLLEGE FOR KIDS program offers courses, by the week:

July 8 -12 July 15 - 19 July 22 - 26

Morning classes run 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 - 5:15 p.m. Afternoon classes run 1:00 - 4:15 p.m. (\$20/hr.)

If you are interested and would like more information, please call **Dawn Moran** at 699-0178. Please leave your name and evening telephone number on the answering machine with a brief message. Your call will be promptly returned.

sta Open Line

The *Open Line* is published monthly September to June at STA, 909 Butternut St., Syracuse, New York 13208. Tel. (315) 472-6374. STA is affiliated with NYSUT, AFT and AFL-CIO.

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STA Web Site: www.nysut.org/syracuse



Here is the next installment:

Test Question specifications - Grade 4

Test questions specifications are provided to ensure consistent development of test questions that meet the goals of the NY State

Mathematics Testing Program. It is necessary to define the range of content with the complexity of the numbers and computation used in test questions.

When computing with Whole Numbers:

- Questions should be involved one or two steps with occasional inclusion of three steps.
- Addition should not exceed four-digit numbers with three addends.
- Subtraction should not exceed two four-digit numbers.
- Multiplication should not exceed three digit by two digits.
- Division should not exceed two-digit divisors or three digit dividends.

When computing with Decimals:

- Questions should be limited to two-steps problems.
- Decimals computation should be limited to problems involving money.
- problems involving money should be limited to addition and subtraction.

-Multiplication of money less than \$10.00 by a one-digit whole number may be included.

-Division involving decimals should not be included.

When Writing, Comparing and Ordering Numbers;

-Place Value of whole numbers should be limited to millions
-Fractions should be common denominators of 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 12.

-place value of decimals may include tenths and hundredths.

-Percents should be common and limited to multiples of 5, such as 10%, 25%, 50% and 110%.


When displaying information in a table or graph:

- Data should not exceed 10 data points
- Data display should be limited to tables, tallies, graphs.


More tips to come....

Fantastic website...check it out:

www.bigchalk.com



Unit 7's
"Food for Thought"



LuAnn Coleman, President
Henninger x 4343

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a *Happy New Year.*

- Please check your pay stubs for the proper deductions.
- Uniform allowance checks should be mailed by February.
- Even though we have settled on a contract, please show our strength and go to your union meetings. We've made headway... let's keep our union strong.
- We have a new priority. If you have not already done so, you should join the retirement system. If you attended the General Membership meeting on January 15th this information was given out. If you were unable to attend please call me (x4343).

WORKSHOPS FOR RECREATION AIDES

Two 2-hour workshops are planned for Rec. Aides on March 15. The sessions will run from 8:30 to 1:00, with a half-hour break between the sessions. Please mark your calendars accordingly. Esther Schiano will be sending complete details during the last week in February.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Unit 7's former president, Rosemary Losurdo, on the death of her husband.

Labor Relations Update

by Lin Ramsey Golash

Attention Teaching Assistants

The SCSD made a mistake in the Spring 2002 Inservice Bulletin. The language on the front page is not correct. Teaching Assistants are eligible to take courses, and earn course credit. The SCSD is sending information to the schools to correct this mistake.

Unit 1 - Date Profiles

The Employee Data Profiles were just sent out by the SCSD. If you believe that there is a mistake on your profile, write a letter to **Randolph Williams**, Director of Personnel outlining the problem. Please send a copy of that letter to the STA.

All Units - Nobody's Perfect

Every staff member in the SCSD at some time makes a mistake, whether your job title is teachers, food service worker, psychologist or hall monitor. Everyone also has "bad days" when your comments to a co-worker may be taken poorly or when you overreact to a co-workers comment.

Recently the STA has been called into situations regarding adults fighting amongst themselves. Co-workers accuse each other of making mistakes, of being disrespectful or of not sharing work equally. Incidents from the last year are recalled and fuel the anger that co-workers are feeling. Finger-pointing at each other will not solve the problems in this district and it has to stop. Students pick up on adult anger, and this kind of infighting can only serve to put both parties at jeopardy in their jobs. Discipline or discharge can be the result of staff fighting if this is brought to the attention of your supervisor.

There are three ways of resolving problems: 1) Ignoring them; 2) Solving the problem yourself; or 3) Asking for assistance in solving the problems. All of those solutions will work in different situations. If you are having a problem with a co-worker, you can ignore it, try to talk to the co-worker, or call another co-worker or the STA office to have someone come in and talk with both of you.

Members of the STA need to try and defeat the current culture of blame by working with each other. Praise the good things your co-workers do. Assist a co-worker having a bad day. Gently discuss any problems you have with each other. Forgive each others mistakes. Discuss with the STA representatives or building committees ways to formally support each other on the job. We need to make sure that all of us model the kind of behavior we want from students in the district. And we all want to feel good about coming to work.

Unit 7 Members

The Unit 7 Contract allows members to be paid for unused sick leave days when they retire. However, they must meet certain conditions: 1) be employed for 15 years; 2) have reached the age of 55; and 3) be eligible for benefits in the New York State Employees Retirement System.

It has come to the STA attention that there are a number of Unit 7 members who are not enrolled, or don't know if they are enrolled in the retirement system. If you fall within this category, please check with the SCSD to see about signing up for this benefit.

Discipline Problems

We have received numerous telephone calls regarding the discipline imposed on students for very serious violations of the Student Code of Conduct. There is a section in the Unit 1 Contract that deals with what to do if you disagree with a discipline outcome. The STA encourages buildings to follow this procedure:

Article VI - Section B(5)h: "Should a teacher believe that a particular disciplinary situation, as it has been processed and resolved within the framework of building procedures, is detrimental to the academic environment of the District, he or she shall have the right to petition the Building Committee of the school in question with the teacher or administrator involved, to be part of the meeting procedure as provided in Article XXII.A and the Association/District Operational Guidelines for Building Committees. Notice of such referral to the Building Committee shall be provided to the administrator at least one week in advance of the Building Committee meeting at which the matter is to be discussed. If the issue is not resolved at the Building Committee level, the Building Committee shall make a recommendation to the Superintendent, or designee, who shall render a final and binding decision within ten school days."

Grants

Freida J. Riley Teacher Award Honors Teachers with Physical Disabilities

Eligibility: K-12 teachers who work with a physical disability, deal with an "especially challenging educational environment" or have performed a heroic act for their students.

Deadline: March 1, 2002

Funds: \$5000, all expense paid trip to Washington, DC in May 2002 to attend ceremony.

Contact: Freida J. Riley Teacher Award, Partnership for America's Future, 80 W Bowery St, Suite 305, Akron, OH 44308; 330-376-8300; e-mail pafinc@ameritech.net.

The award honors Ms. Riley, a teacher who taught despite suffering from Hodgkin's Disease.

Applicants should have achieved great teaching goals in spite of hardships and who have excelled despite adversity.

Inspired Teacher Scholarship

Eligibility: K-12 teachers with at least one year of experience

Deadline: March 1, 2002

Funds: Twenty grants of \$500 each

Contact: Inspiration Software Inc, Attn: Inspired Teacher Scholarship, 7412 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway, Portland, OR 97225-2167; fax 503-297-4676; e-mail marketing@inspiration.com.

Grants honor educators who are "passionate advocates of visual learning: in their classrooms, schools, and/or districts. Applicants should use visual learning techniques to improve student learning and integrate visual learning and technology into curricula. Grants will defray expenses related to workshops, conferences, or graduate courses that address visual learning and technology in education.

Community News

Mission Steps

The 4th Annual Mission Steps walk to benefit Multiple Sclerosis Resources of Central New York, Inc., a local agency dedicated to creating awareness and providing resources to improve the lives of individuals with MS and their families, will be held on Sunday, March 10 at the Carousel Center.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. in the Carousel Center commons and the Walk kicks off at 10:00 a.m. Walkers choose either a 3 or 5 mile route raising awareness and funds for the local fight against MS. All walkers raising pledges will receive a t-shirt, goody bag and lunch coupons. The walk is held completely indoors free of obstacles, weather elements, traffic, etc. The mall is accessible and we encourage people to bring their scooters or wheelchairs. For more information call Annette @ MS Resources (315) 438-4790.

Kudos

Central Tech would like to thank **Jill Lowenstein** for her excellent help with the IEP's.

Congratulations to **Jim Wright!** Jim works with the school district and is co-convenor of SVPN, was named New York State school psychologist of the year.

STA Christmas Tree

The STA Tree for the Everson Tree Celebration was a huge success. Thank you to all who worked on it. Several of our STA members came to the STA office after school to work on decorations. Many members worked on decorations from their homes. We look forward to an even better tree next year. Contact **Joyce Farrell** (x4934) if your interested in working towards another great tree for next year.

Benefit for Tiers 2, 3, and 4... Personal Profile, Please!

The presents have been opened, the calendar has turned to 2002 and the next big event you have to look forward to is...why, the arrival of your STRS Benefit Profile, of course!

The 12-page document, provided to active members annually, is the most useful retirement planning tool available to our members. It contains service credit information, retirement benefit projections, beneficiary facts and many items personal to you. We encourage you to use it as it is intended: a self-auditing tool that helps ensure you will receive all the benefits for which you are eligible.

For those closest to retirement age (51 and older), this year's Profile contains a new feature: a complete accounting of service history, including your employers and total service credit earned at each. For those without contributions, we show you how a pension is calculated.

Another change involves the in-service death benefit for Tiers 2, 3 and 4. Due to a change in law, members of those tiers who selected the Paragraph 1 Death Benefit will now be eligible either for that

benefit or the Paragraph 2 Death Benefit, whichever is higher. The higher benefit will be projected in the Profile.

For members employed on a 12-month basis (administrators, for example), benefit projections are now computed using your contract salaries only. This change was made because payments such as taxable fringe benefits, retirement incentives and pay for unused leave that may be reported to the System cannot be used in a three-year final average salary calculation.

As a result of this change, your benefit projection in the Profile may be lower than those you received previously.

You should receive your Profile in January. If you do not receive yours by mid-February, please contact the System at 800-348-7298, Ext. 2941 or 2995.

*NYSTRS Your Source...
December 2001*

*We have reminded the District
about the Data Profiles.*

Editor's note: STA conducted a NYSTRS Seminar here at STA on Wednesday, February 6. There will also be a workshop for NYSERS members on Thursday, March 7 at 6:00 p.m. Please call the STA office at x4526 to make your reservation.

Unit 10's "Health Beat"

**Ann O'Hara, President
VanDuyn 4618**

January 23 School Nurse Day

Throughout the entire school year our nurses perform their tasks in their usual conscientious manner without fanfare or attention seeking. They continue to extend themselves for the welfare of the students and to be available for faculty and staff as well as parents and outside agencies. They exemplify the most beneficent qualities of the nursing profession and of humanity in general.

It is most fitting that there be a special recognition day to permit us to pay tribute to our nurses for their ongoing dedication and care.

January 16, 2002

Congress approves nursing incentives.

New York stands to benefit from a new federal initiative designed to help stem the national shortage of nurses.

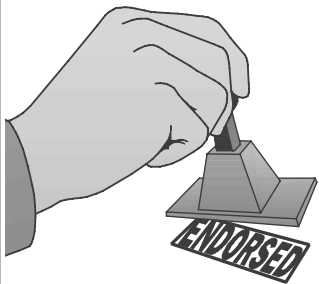
The Nurse Reinvestment Act, which Congress approved Dec. 21 and sent to President Bush for his signature, would create nursing scholarship programs for students who commit to work in areas of critical shortages.

New York State United Teachers has been seeking similar legislation in New York, according to NYSUT Executive Vice President Alan Lubin. The union has won similar benefits for those who agree to teach in under-served areas.

NYSUT's national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers, lobbied for the federal bill, which AFT President Sandra Feldman called "a step in the right direction to restoring quality patient care in America's hospitals."

AFT Website

OPPORTUNITY PLUS MILESTONES



NYSUT's innovative Opportunity Plus 403(b) Tax-Deferred Variable Annuity program is the result of a partnership between NYSUT Benefit Trust and Aetna Life Insurance and Annuity Company. This 12-year partnership has been characterized by an ongoing series of enhancements, initiated by NYSUT Benefit Trust in recognition of an existing or emerging need. NYSUT Benefit Trust will continue to enhance Opportunity Plus in innovative ways to help meet the needs of our members.



1991

Dedicated Service Center established to provide immediate access to trained service analysts through one convenient toll-free number.

1992

Additional payout options added: Estate Conservation Option (ECO) and Systematic Withdrawal Option (SWO).

Model Portfolios introduced to assist in taking full advantage of the range of Opportunity Plus investment options.

1993

Account Rebalancing introduced to assist in maintaining one's personal investment portfolio.

1994

NYSUT introduced Lifestyle Security Protection®, underwritten and provided by First Unum, to protect annuity contributions against premature death or disability.

1995

Deferred sales charges (DSC) eliminated on new monies deposited into the Guaranteed Accumulation Account (GAA) or any of the variable funds.

1996

SurvivorSupport® Financial Counseling Service for terminally ill Opportunity Plus participants and survivors of deceased participants introduced.

1998

NYSUT, in concert with ALIAC, introduced NYSUT Variable Universal Life Insurance, NYSUT VLI.

In addition to the 24-hour electronic transfer capability, Internet access introduced.

1999

Quarterly maintenance fee eliminated.

2000

Mortality and Expense Risk Charge (M&E) reduced to 1.10% (0.35% on the Money Market Fund). M&E decreased to 1.05% on February 15, 2001 and will decrease to 1.00% on February 15, 2002.

Additional payout option added: Life Expectancy Option (LEO).

Dollar Cost Averaging for transfers and rollovers added, a systematic approach to investing.

Ten investment selections added.

Employer contributions (matching or non-elective) to 403(b) programs became possible and available through Opportunity Plus.

2001

Six investment selections added, bringing the total to 49 diverse investment funding options to choose from.

Why not enhance your personal financial situation by saving for your future in a 403(b) plan? Opportunity Plus is the only 403(b) that was designed exclusively for NYSUT members and agency fee payers. For more information, call the Opportunity Plus Service Center at 1-800-677-4636, or visit www.aetnafinancial.com/custom/nysut online.