



President's Opening Day Message

Lynn Gilyard

ETA Members,

This school year marks my 30th year in education, and as I reflect on my career as an educator, three specific occasions come to mind that have become major events in history: the first woman in space, Krista McAuliffe, and the explosion of Challenger, 9-1 1, and the flood of last September, all of which I was in my classroom with the children I chose to teach. In the past two years as your ETA president, I have experienced a plethora of unprecedented events, too many to list, in the history of Union Endicott- or what I refer to as "trial by fire"; again remembering this as a choice I made to represent colleagues in our profession.

Each year as the end of summer rolls around, I notice the changes in the cool night air, darkness falling earlier, and the onset of morning fog. I anticipate the excitement of the start of a new school year as if I was a new teacher be-

ginning my career in education for the first time.

Last year Maria Neira, NYSUT Vice President, spoke to us regarding accountability and the challenges we face as educators today. In this current economy, during a time of accountability, high stakes testing and scrutiny like no other before, why choose education, why assume responsibility for children and adults, why teaching? I can only say that I love my job! My choice to become a teacher is my passion. As I make plans for the upcoming changes in our profession I remember why I became a teacher in the first place, knowing that there were no other career choices, as long as I could remember.

Teaching is a choice and a passion; a profession we can all be proud to share!

How will the changes affect our profession? How will we handle the added pressures and responsibilities? While I was reorganizing a cup-

board in my classroom, I came across materials from in-service courses on *Differentiated Instruction, Discipline with Dignity, Collaboration in the Classroom*, to mention a few. These class titles are very similar to the seven teaching standards New York State has set for us to attain on a yearly basis. Realizing I have the tools to move forward somehow made the challenge a little less daunting.

I sat in the UEHS auditorium for the GFJ 5th grade recognition ceremony and listened to two seniors give advice to the fifth graders moving ahead to JFS or 6th grade. Dan McGraw said it very simply and his words inspired me to share his profound thoughts with you.

First, his parents taught him life was not always fair. Second, be respectful; treat others as you would like to be treated. Next, get involved; and lastly, do your very best!

In closing, reflect on your career choice and

think of the upcoming school year as a new beginning. As life-long learners, share in the excitement of new learning. Remember the advice of a student and your passion and choice in a profession nobler than any other. Teach and be proud!



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Respect Your Sick Bank

Donna Powell

The sick bank for ETA members is a God-send for many people. In catastrophic situations which take people by surprise, it can mean the difference between being destitute or saving one's destiny. What a graceful charity it is, and we are fortunate to have this to fall back on in an emergency situation, often in the face of fatal illness. Members have applied to the sick bank to ensure that they are able to receive paychecks to pay bills, achieve retirement status in sickness, and face family crises without the fear of worrying about financial burdens. It is heartwarming to see the positive impact upon their lives through the generosity of their colleagues.

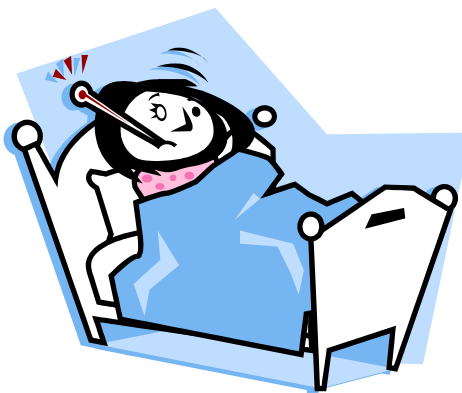
As ETA members, we need to reflect upon the purpose of the sick bank. It is designed to help in situations that are unexpected, catastrophic and cannot be postponed. Its intent is to offer aid in a crisis which demands immediate attention, and it should be a last resort. Members donate from their own accumulation of sick days to keep the bank going for those in need. Nurses donate, but only get 10 sick days per year (teachers get 12). Recently, members have been asked to donate far more than expected. Sometimes, these donations are costly to the givers, as it negatively impacts their retire-

ment benefits. Take for example, a teacher who rarely uses sick days, donates throughout their career, but as the person greets retirement, has a medical disability, requiring subtraction from their own sick days. Although the teacher never needed to go to the sick bank, the health insurance benefit in retirement is reduced. (Perhaps some members don't realize that health coverage is determined by your percentage of unused sick days.) Because this teacher donated all those years, only 59% of the sick days may be left, meaning he/she would pay 35% of the premium. If he/she never had to donate, there would be more unused sick days, and the premium would be only 30%. That's a huge cost for a charitable soul!

So when we take from the sick bank, we may be making life difficult for others. People are willing to give to those in need, but we need to decide if our situations are truly worthy of reliance upon the sick bank. We need to ask ourselves if a medical disability can be planned until it's more manageable so the sick bank is not constantly drained. Perhaps it's a surgery that can wait until vacation. Perhaps it's a family planning decision. Perhaps the medical disability can be shortened. We need to search our conscience and make

our confidential choices. Hopefully, we can manage some control over our health, but for those who are not able to do this, we stand behind you. As fellow members, we want to support one another in time of need. To call upon this generosity for situations that are not in keeping with the spirit of this fund, is to place the very existence of this fund in jeopardy. We are proud to be a part of such a gracious effort to help in devastation; let's not take the sick bank lightly.

Submitted by
Donna Powell
Chief Negotiator



CONGRATULATIONS!

Kelli Krieger won an award!
Teachers Hall of Fame —
Teachers Rock 2012!
She won a \$500 Wal-Mart Gift card.
Way to go Kelli!!!



SHARE MY LESSON: **Free resources by teachers, for teachers**

Sylvia Saunders - NYSUT Communications - September 11, 2012

It's a little like a desktop faculty room, a place to share great ideas and create a community.

Developed by teachers, for teachers, "Share My Lesson

(<http://www.sharemylesson.com/>)" was launched over the summer

by the American Federation of Teachers and Britain's TES Connect, and already has more than 250,000 resources. It's a free digital platform that allows educators around the country to collaborate and share teaching resources and innovative ideas.

AFT President Randi Weingarten and NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi met this week with Hudson Valley educators at an event in Suffern to encourage them to take a look at the free service, spread the word and help expand offerings.

"Our whole strategy here is to try to help, to fill some of the void at a time of great austerity," Weingarten said.

She noted New York is one of 46 states shifting to a common core curriculum this year, yet there is little money for resources to help with the transition.

"They tell you there's no money, no time to work together, just do it," Weingarten said. "Well, as part of our solution-driven unionism, let's invest to help make it happen." (Items on the site linked to common core curriculum are identified with a badge).

"What's great about this is it's a living document, with the ability to keep adding content and adjusting as we go along," Iannuzzi said.

He said lessons from NYSUT's award-winning "Speak Truth to Power" curriculum, developed in conjunction with the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, are included on the site as well. "And if you have social justice lessons, let us know and we can link it all together."

AFT's Heidi Glidden explained the content will be supplemented by tens of thousands of contributions from hundreds of content partners, including Sesame Street and Encyclopedia Britannica. Users are also encouraged to form special interest communities, such as music teachers or English as a

Second Language educators. "It's about more than loading materials," Glidden said. "It's about sharing and building communities."

"Share My Lesson (<http://www.sharemylesson.com/>) is a great resource for teachers," said Valley Central TA President Tim Brown. "It provides an instant practitioner-based means for teachers to collaborate on a national and global level, further demonstrating our profession's dedication to putting children center. Kudos to the AFT!"

Educators can register and start using the site immediately. For a limited time, registrants are eligible for a number of prizes, including a grand prize of \$5,000 toward a student loan.





Contract Trivia

See if you know the answers to these questions.



1) How Many Sick days do you get per year?

2) How many personal days do you get per year?

3) What are the reasons you may take a personal day?

4) Who are your sick days for?

5) When can you not take a personal day?

6) What is the maximum class size per grade level?

K—_____

1st—_____

2nd—5th_____

6th—12th_____

7) What is Mosaics and who is the editor?

8) What is VOTE Cope and why is it important?

9) What time does the school day start?

10) When can you leave the school building after a school day?

Look for more questions in the next issue.

Answers:

1) 12 days

2) 3 days, bout you can accumulate to 5 days

3) Personal

4) You

5) When you don't have any more, to extend a holiday/long weekend, 1st day of school, and the last day of school

6) K—24 students, 1st—26 students, 2nd-5th—28 students, 6th-12th - 125 students

7) Communication between ETA members, Kim Repchak krepchak@uek12.org

8) NYSUT lobby source, funds provided by NYSUT to provide lobby-ists to look out for us, political action

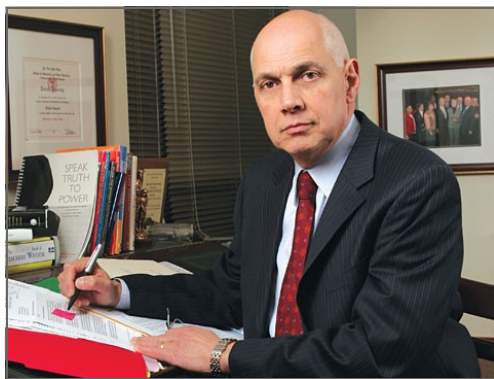
9) 5 minutes before first bell

10) 5 minutes after the last bus leaves



Testimony before the Governor's Education Reform Commission

Richard C. Iannuzzi



Tomorrow morning, Vice President Maria Neira and I will be presenting oral testimony before the Governor's Education Reform Commission. NYSUT's formal written testimony was forwarded to the Commission last night, is posted at nysut.org under Leader Access and will be posted on our public site at ten tomorrow morning when the hearings begin on Long Island. Please treat it as "EMBARGOED" until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

I'm never sure how the press will report out what NYSUT says or does — our experience with their accuracy leaves a lot to be desired — so, I thought I'd use this vehicle to share some thoughts with you about our thinking and strategy — the purpose I shared with you for these L2L e-mails. Of course, the full document is being shared with you so that you can make up your own mind (a novel concept in today's politically charged atmosphere)!

It would be easy — and a personal catharsis — to show up tomorrow angry and banging on the table. I'm sure it would also please some leaders and members and, no doubt, the press. But, does it accomplish our goals? Protests, rallies and public events are strategies that we some-

times confuse with the ends or goals we need to achieve. They may be means to an end, but shouldn't be seen as ends in themselves. To this end (pun intended) we've taken a different strategy.

NYSUT's formal testimony (the concepts of which were shared with the Board of Directors at our last meeting) begins by acknowledging the accomplishments so many of our educators and schools have achieved. It then references the damage and potential future damage caused by the massive school aid cuts, state aid cap and property tax cap. Note, I deliberately referenced the property tax cap lawsuit and support for the current Small Cities School Districts' case in my radio interview (see Susan Arbetter interview at www.nysut.org), which got statewide print coverage, so as to get the message out, just before giving testimony, as to how serious we are about the property tax cap and issues of equity.

The testimony then makes three kinds of recommendations: strictly cost savings like health and drug consortiums; cost savings and potential educational advantages, for instance, with mergers or consolidation of services; and, needed investments in educational programs like pre-school, community services provided as part of the school experience (we call these "Empire State Partnership Schools") and a greater investment in Career and Technical Education.

Finally, fully a third of the testimony is devoted to improving teaching and learning. Reinforced by Maria's oral testimony, we first stress the need to invest in professional development to support teachers and evaluators in dealing with the changes taking

place. Testing is taken on directly by demanding multiple measures of achievement and authentic assessment so as to strike a proper balance between accountability and a deeper understanding of the whole child (less done correctly is more).

Most importantly, we ask the Commission to allow time to recalibrate so that the Common Core and new evaluation system can be implemented properly. Lastly, we look for the Commission to stress the need to hear the voices of practitioners, and we call for a statewide survey of teaching and learning conditions.

As the year progresses, we hope to expand on these ideas — constantly holding up the need to invest in education against the devastation caused by budget cuts and caps. This strategy is designed to align us with the parents and communities that we will need to have the density to carry our issues forward. It will coordinate with community outreach projects currently under way or in development.

Some might argue that this is too reasonable an approach or that it doesn't have enough passion. To that end, I repeat a quote I used in my RA speech last spring. Kahlil Gibran reminds us in *The Prophet* that we should "rest in reason ... and move in passion." For now, the Commission is a place for reason. We'll see where things go from here.

In solidarity,

Richard C. Iannuzzi, President NYSUT



Neira: 'We can learn from what Finland is NOT doing'

By Maria Neira, NYSUT Vice President - NYSUT United - September 24,

I've had a few weeks to reflect on my recent visit to Finland, and I'm struck by the many contrasts between this small Nordic nation and our own. As New York state and the nation grapple with reform agendas that devalue teachers and over-emphasize testing, Finland is taking a different path. Now, after 30 years of commitment to its sustained educational strategy, Finland is consistently ranked number one in international measures of student achievement. For me, the essential question is this: What lessons can be drawn from Finland's experience to broaden the conversations in New York state about public education?

I traveled to Finland as a member of a delegation comprised of top-ranking policymakers for the U.S. Department of Education, other union leaders, higher education faculty and leaders of think tanks and education foundations. We witnessed Finland's successful departure from "conventional

wisdom" and its commitment to a comprehensive long-term strategy that runs counter to prevailing reforms in the U.S.

The first thing we noticed? Everything Finland is NOT doing.

Thirty years ago, when the country fundamentally remade its education system, Finland said "no" to high stakes testing, tons of homework, market-style competition and developmentally inappropriate academic drills in early childhood. Pasi Sahlberg, director general at the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, told us Finland's educators are, in fact, firm in their opposition to the tenets of what he calls the "Global Education Reform Movement" — GERM.

We were inspired to hear how Finland moved from mediocrity to international achievement through a sane, comprehensive strategy that centers on teacher professionalism, early childhood education for all and equity in education.

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of the Finnish educational revolution is the value and trust it places on teachers. Finland prioritizes the importance of teaching as a profession — not by paying it lip service, but by making a sustained investment in preparing and empowering teachers as professionals.

Finland pays for the education of its teachers, who are required to earn a master's degree that encompasses a full year of practice teaching at a Professional Learning School, fully supported with a stipend.

This high-quality, immersive preparation produces a corps of professionals whose country has invested in them and consequently empowers them as trusted professionals. Imagine what it would be like to teach in a system where you are trusted to

assess student progress and help design curriculum!

That trust means Finland's teacher unions are full partners in making educational decisions large and small.

Several members of the delegation asked a Finnish union leader: "What happens when there is a disagreement?"

He looked surprised. "It wouldn't happen, because we're all at the table from the beginning to the end," he said. "Our goal, and our result, is consensus."

What occurred in Chicago — teachers forced to strike because of top-down, educationally unsound directives — would be unthinkable in Finland, where 96 percent of teachers are unionized and fully empowered as equal professional partners.

Second, Finland provides quality early childhood programs for all children beginning at age 3. The programs are staffed by teachers holding bachelor's degrees and are designed around a deep understanding of child development that emphasizes play as a developmental necessity. Refreshingly, we didn't see 3-year-olds being drilled on numbers or letters.

They were engaged in play and interaction with adults that provide the developmental foundation for academic growth. This comprehensive early childhood program is buttressed by a strong social services network, a focus on the whole child, and a sense of shared responsibility to ensure children are ready to learn.

Third, Finland has made equal opportunity for all the fundamental underpinning of its education system. Unlike the U.S., where resources devoted to a child's education are dependent on geography and parental wealth, Finland's commitment is to give all students a quality public edu-





Neira (cont.)

cation based on high expectations for every child.

Repeatedly, we heard: "Education is a priority in this country. When it comes to making budget cuts, education isn't touched, regardless of what party's in power."

Equity is reflected not only by resources, but in Finland's commitment to small class sizes, early intervention and wrap-around services. Think about what our system would be like if we followed Finland's lead and made educational equity the driver for every decision we made!

One surprise for me was Finland's growing diversity. I had expected a

homogeneous student body, yet visited a school where 35 percent of the students are immigrants. Since the 1990s, Finland has grown increasingly diverse and at a rate faster than any other country in Europe. Ten percent of the country is now non-Finnish speaking.

Of course, the tenets of Finland's progress — teacher professionalism, early childhood education and equity for all children — are not new. In our country, research has confirmed the value of these fundamental principles and NYSUT, along with the AFT and NEA, have espoused them for decades.

Yet it was inspiring to see in Finland proof that a sustained, sane, comprehensive strategy delivers results — a compelling contrast to "flavor of the month" reforms and so-called quick fixes.

For us to adopt a similar strategy would, without question, require a fundamental re-thinking of how we view public education, and a commitment to systemic, long-term change. Finland's philosophy that "everyone owns the child" and has shared responsibility for ensuring all children are ready to learn is a powerful lesson we all can share as we move forward in New York state.



Your ETA T.E.A.M.

AGM

Joe Alig

Jennifer Bittler

Mike Terboss

Judy Wolfe

Joe Brainard

CFJ

Jude Carlini

Bonnie Zulick

TJW

JoAnne Curley-Bettis

GFJ

Jan Simone

Kristen Wood

Beth Humphrey

UEHS

Amy Mertsen

Ben Reid

Tom Feheley

Trevor Herceg

Doug Hubert

Kyle Wolf

Jeff Rinde

JFS

Jon Stank

Ken Lyman

Let Member Benefits help you save a few dollars



It seems like we make so many purchases on a daily basis – whether it's everyday routine items, back-to-school shopping, holiday gifts, or just something for that special occasion.

Are you keeping NYSUT Member Benefits in mind before making these purchases? If not, now is the time to start doing so! We are always here to help you save a few dollars in this financially unstable economy.

Need to book a hotel or condo for an upcoming trip? We're here for you! Maybe you're looking for the latest and greatest electronic gadgets for your loved ones this holiday season? We can help with that too!

Your NYSUT membership brings with it many advantages and benefits – including the opportunity to utilize our endorsed discount programs. Check out the box below for a sampling of some of the discount programs available to you.

Car & Truck Rental Discounts

– Take advantage of a variety of discounted car & truck rental rates offered by Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National.

Wyndham Hotels & Endless

Vacation Rentals – Enjoy savings of up to 20% at nearly 7,000 participating hotels and 25% at more than 200,000 vacation rentals in 100 countries.

TripMark.travel – Use this all-inclusive travel program when planning your next trip or use the group travel feature for your next family reunion.

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Working Advantage – Get discount tickets for online shopping, theme parks, museums and attractions, and other special family events.

Motivano SmartSavings Online Discount Marketplace – Shop for sales and discounts on dining, travel and more.

Bose® – Special pricing available to NYSUT members and agency fee payers on consumer products.

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Save 5% on technology items such as electronics and business machines and 10% on office supplies, furniture, ink/toner, and OfficeMax ImPress® services.

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Do you have elderly relatives who are having trouble with their hearing? Save between 35% and 65% on brand-name hearing aids and products.

Visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org for a complete listing of endorsed programs and services available to you. Don't forget that you can always call us with any questions as well at **800-626-8101**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



Endicott Teachers' Association Mission



The Endicott Teachers' Association is an organization dedicated to improving not only the working conditions of its membership but also to improving the quality of education for the students of the Union Endicott School District. Our members are united in a common commitment to provide for the greater good through service, dedication and knowledge. It is our mission "To Build Better Tomorrows. We believe that education is the key to a better future for our members and our students. It is a life-long activity and this is reflected in our mission and in our dedicated service to our students and to the community in which they live. You can find Endicott Teachers Association members working in their classrooms and in our community. They generously donate their time and efforts to improving the lives of their students. Through the ETA Teacher-Community Fund and ETA scholarships, the members continue to donate thousands of dollars to help those in need, improve the community and help their students further their education.

ETA rises to the challenge of preparing our students for the 21st Century. There will always be new challenges in the field of public education but the Endicott Teachers Association will continue to meet these challenges in the present and future as it always has in the past. ETA will meet those challenges with unity of purpose and commitment to the highest standards for our members and for the students placed in our care.



Endicott Teachers' Association Leadership

President — Lynn Gilyard
Elementary Vice President — Donna Powell
Secondary Vice President — Shane Hurd
Secretary — Karen Mouillesseaux
Treasurer — Cheryl Davis
Membership Secretary — Jennifer Short
Grievance — Erin Shaffer
 Jennifer Stevenson
 Jeff Rinde
Pride — Jan Simone
 Tom Ferraro
Mosaics — Kimberly Repchak
Delegates — Michelle Greco
 Kimberly Repchak

