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Dear Colleagues,

Christmas and the New Year are nearly upon us; Hanukkah and Thanksgiving recently past, and we're currently having February in the middle of December. Happily we're about to get a full two week break, courtesy of the contractual change that moved two of our superintendent's days into the last week of August. While the shift of those two days was a difficult decision, and far from unanimous, there does seem to be a widespread satisfaction with the fact that we once again get all the holidays off during the school year.

While the pace of change and the associated conflict have slowed this year, the opposite has been true for educational issues outside of the classroom. Many parents have become increasingly vocal in their opposition to excessive and often inappropriate state testing brought on by the overly rapid implementation of the Common Core, with the SED putting the cart before the horse, or more accurately, the tests before the teaching. While in the past several years teacher protests against the APPR and the

inappropriate pace of Common Core implementation fell upon largely deaf ears, last year's elections and the increasingly widespread parent voice has captured the attention of many a politician. Local forums held by NYS Board of Regents members, and another by the State Assembly minority (Republican) group were both very well attended, and many people spoke very articulately about the need for a serious review of SED policies and decisions. We are told that some politicians are once again sharpening their pens to draft legislation, and we are hopeful that it may be more responsive to genuine student needs than in the past several years; we shall see.

In Webster our existing PLC structure has provided a framework that has served us well as we adapt to the changing demands of the curriculum and the APPR; many other districts have not been so fortunate. Our discussions with our colleagues indicate that most find much of value in the Common Core, but that we would like to be clear on what we're teaching before it gets tested. This mirrors NYSUT's stance, and they are attempting to slow the pace of implementation, not to stop it. They are also working to develop proposals by which the existing APPR law could be improved through legislation. This last piece is tricky, as the NYSUT leadership helped negotiate the existing law – but did not have any say in many of the SED regulations which have made the law so difficult to live with. Certainly there has been much debate among the NYSUT leadership about how to best engage the state on these issues. Those disagreements should make for a most interesting Representative Assembly this April.

With the government having declared a low rate of inflation, the tax cap will continue to cause us problems, and if it continues in its current form, promises to complicate the contract negotiations that will take place next year. NYSUT's lawsuit against the tax cap is still in process, as are their efforts to support education-friendly candidates. The 2014 elections will certainly have consequences for us; please do everything you can to support your fellow teachers, and your own self-interests by working with your union. NYSUT's Member Action Center <https://mac.nysut.org/> makes it easy to participate, and donations to vote-cope go a long way towards political gain for teachers. As NYSUT vice-president Maria Neira noted the other week, "NYSUT has 600,000 members on paper." We need to all do our share to make those numbers real; through active participation, the benefits we save could be our own.

In solidarity,

Steven Turiano, WTA President

The attendance at this year's WTA Benefits Fair was disappointingly low. Fortunately both the food and vendors were in full attendance, and we had a nice range of door prizes, which were drawn from entries at the end of the event – winners are listed below. For those who attended, this also provided an informal opportunity to speak with several of our BOE members, Carm & Adele, your union representatives, and colleagues from around the district. While we had not anticipated any impacts from the Affordable Health Care Act, as it turned out there were new paperwork requirements regarding the local health care buy-out, so those who attended were able to speak with the District's Benefits Office workers, get their questions quickly answered, and take the necessary steps to continue participation in the buy-out.

Winners from WTA Benefits Fair 2013

WPLC Gift Basket	Kathy Scerra -Schlegel
\$25 Barnes & Noble gift card	Kristina O'Brien-Klem South
(Omni Group) TJMaxx/Marshalls/Home Goods \$50 GC	Kelly Stevens-State Road
Family First gift card	Marlene-Giffert-Matthews-Willink
(Aflac) Duck stuffed animal and 2 pack of golf balls	Steve Grose-Thomas
Key Bank Backpack and goodies	Sandy Pray-State
Met Life Blanket	Emily Miller-Thomas
Excellus car and winter clothing accessories	Sue Thompson-Thomas
Canandaigua National Bank Blanket	Marc Foster- Thomas
First Investors \$10 Itunes gift cards	Amanda Spaminato-Dewitt
	Julie Provenzano-Klem North
	Kathy Rook-Willink
Thirty One travel pouch	Vickie Curry-Spry
(State Farm) \$25 gift cards	Jeffrey Eckler – Schroeder
	Pam Smith – Klem North



Thinking about Retirement?

**If you are within 5 years of retirement,
the Webster Teachers Association
invites you and a guest to attend a
Retirement Seminar
presented by Paul Farfaglia,
Teacher Member of the NYSTRS Board**



**Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 5pm
Spry Middle School Auditorium
Dinner will be provided following the presentation**

**R.S.V.P. to: Jeanne Coonan
by Monday, December 16**

Please indicate how many will attend.

If you will not be staying for dinner, please indicate that as well.





Thousands of New Yorkers went blue for the **National Day of Action on December 9th** in a call for:

- fair funding for public schools and colleges;
- a three-year moratorium on high-stakes consequences of state standardized tests; and
- a renewed focus on teaching and learning, not testing!

Let's build on the momentum! 7 Action Steps You Can Take

NYSUT members can take several steps to hold Regents accountable:

- Sign the letter at www.nysut.org/dayofactionletter.
- Watch what they do. Regents meet monthly in Albany. Video of the proceedings is streamed from the State Education Department's website - www.regents.nysed.gov - where you'll find the meeting schedule, agenda and videos from past meetings.
 - Find the Regent who represents your area by going to the interactive map at www.regents.nysed.gov/members/findrep.html.
 - Contact your Regent via email or phone from information listed on www.regents.nysed.gov.
 - Invite your Regent for a classroom visit to show first-hand what you do and the impact their decisions have on your students.
 - Ask your local leader to invite your Regent to your next membership meeting.
 - Keep your legislators updated about the decisions Regents make that affect your school.

A financial safety net for NYSUT members & their families

Long-term care insurance pays for services that aren't covered by Medicare or traditional health insurance but are important when you can't fully take care of yourself.

You may think it's unnecessary since you have no plans of ending up in a nursing home or requiring assistance for basic daily activities. The fact remains, though, that none of us can predict what's going to happen in the future.

This is where long-term care insurance comes into play – helping to pay the high cost of custodial care and other long-term care expenses that a long-term illness or injury can bring.

That's why the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust is excited to be back in the long-term care business with the endorsement of New York Long-Term Care Brokers.

With this endorsed program, NYSUT members and their eligible family members have the opportunity to receive a 5% to 10% discount on various plans.

With regional representatives throughout New York state and beyond, eligible individuals have access to long-term care insurance plans from multiple highly-rated insurance companies – including the New York State Partnership for Long-Term Care.

And with Americans living longer than ever today, the need for a financial safety net has never been greater. Through this endorsed program, eligible individuals can get a long-term care insurance plan designed with their specific needs in mind.



And don't automatically discount the cost of this type of insurance as it may be far more affordable than you may think.

If you or a loved one has been previously declined for long-term care insurance, you may still be insurable with a different company.

NYLTCB represents numerous long-term care insurance companies – all with different medical underwriting guidelines. Make sure to ask your long-term care insurance specialist for more details.

We encourage you to look into the cost of a long-term care plan tailored to your specific needs.

For more information about this endorsed offering, please contact **NYLTCB toll-free at 888-884-0077**. You can also contact Member Benefits with any questions at **800-626-8101** or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.



WTA Executive Board Meeting Dates

[1st Monday of the month]

September 9, 2013

October 7, 2013

November 4, 2013

December 2, 2013

January 13, 2014

February 10, 2014

March 10, 2014

April 7, 2014

May 5, 2014

June 2, 2014

WTA Representative Council Meeting Dates

[3rd Monday of the month]

September 23, 2013

October 21, 2013

November 18, 2013

December 16, 2013

January 27, 2014

February 24, 2014

March 24, 2014

April 28, 2014

May 19, 2014

June 16, 2014



Webster Teachers' Association (Established 1972)

Representing 730+ teachers in 11 schools
(7 elementary, 2 middle and 2 high schools)
in the Webster Central School District

Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT/NEA, and the AFL-CIO

WTA office

Thomas High School, Room #90

800 Five Mile Line Road

Webster, New York 14580

President's CELL PHONE: 585-683-9147

<http://www.wta1972.com>