

Webster Teachers' Association

The Voice February 2012 Edition

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*Please send your comments or suggestions for The Voice to WTA
The Voice Editor, Christine Dunne,*

Dear Colleagues,

The governor of the state of New York has recently felt the need to interfere in the process of developing new APPRs for teachers for his own political purposes. This is most unfortunate, for his actions have introduced both a new degree of uncertainty and delay into the process, and a degree of harm, the magnitude of which is yet to be determined. By altering his promise to increase funding to schools by 4% this year, and withholding a portion of the funds to be doled out only if his conditions are met, he is reducing the ability of school districts across the state to meet the needs of their students.

Governor Cuomo has in effect demanded that NYSUT drop its lawsuit against the State Education Department, which NYSUT had already won on a number of points, wherever the regulations violated the existing law. The obvious answer (tell the SED to write regulations that comply with the law) is apparently not being considered by the governor, and at the time of this writing, the outcome of this political struggle is yet to be determined. But there is money now tied to having a new APPR in place for the 2012-2013 school year, despite there being many unanswered questions, and the fact that many of the assessments we are expected to use do not yet exist. Therefore in Webster we are continuing our work on the APPR to the best of our ability, and hope that the governor's actions do not render any of work inapplicable.

The governor has also launched a dishonest and misguided attack against teachers' pensions, and is demanding the creation of a Tier 6 for new teachers, which would not have a pension benefit. Those of us in earlier tiers are not immune from the effects of this, for the new tier would steer funding away from the existing pension system. Right now the NYSTRS is more than 100% funded, and more than 80% of the funds in the system came from returns on investments. If the size of the fund is forced to shrink over the years, the economies of scale will be cut, the pension system's costs will rise and the return on investment will shrink. These actions could make the lie that the current system is "not sustainable" become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Please use the link to the NYSUT legislative action page on a regular basis, and take any and all

actions to help NYSUT protect teachers' futures.

Our own contractual negotiations team has met with the administrative team and established procedural norms and set future dates. The process will be in full swing later this month. We used our member survey and meetings with various teacher representatives to help develop our original negotiations package. As we work through the process and develop a clearer picture of administrative goals, our negotiations team will meet with individual teachers or groups to provide any guidance that is necessary. The WTA certainly hopes that we will be able to reach agreement upon a new contract by the end of this school year.

In the meantime, please regularly check our WTA website and NYSUT.org, and read the monthly minutes from our Representative Council meetings. Remember that all members are able to attend our Representative Council meetings, and to run for any union office. The more individuals get involved, the stronger we will be, so please consider taking a turn as a building representative, or as an alternate.

In solidarity,
Steven Turiano

W.T.A. Scholarship Application available on the WTA website under documents



WTA Scholarships will be awarded to senior children of WTA members (choice of major does not affect eligibility). In addition, other Webster High School seniors who will be pursuing a career in education may also qualify.

Please have them forwarded to Laura D'Angelo, Webster Schroeder High School, 875 Ridge Road, Webster, New York 14580 or electronically to Laura_D'Angelo@websterschools.org.

Application deadline is April 5th, 2012. No applications will be accepted after that date. Be sure to follow through and have all requirements turned in by the deadline.

Brothers and Sisters...

If you read the news lately, there always seems to be an article about our profession, APPR, funding, school taxes, etc. Many of the articles are blasting unions and the “power” we have over an “educational monopoly”. They say that reform is needed... even our governor here in New York has threatened to be ready to “fight for our kids”... and hold back funding amongst other things. The question naturally becomes then are we not fighting for our kids too? Do we not also want what is best for them? The apparent line in the sand has been drawn and we are forced to spend time defending our profession instead of doing what we want to do which is to teach students. Below, please find some articles we have found that illustrate the range of opinions out there. There are articles on Cuomo, as well as an interesting NYT article on race to the top funding and the political games it played. The other two are pieces about how society values teachers. We hope you enjoy these.



In the next few months, we will be attending Committee of 100 meetings in Albany to fight for our rights and let the state powers that be know what needs to happen and what is best for students. We will be there “fighting for the kids”.

Jim McEntee & Dan Prinzi, co-Chairs of the WTA Political Action Committee

[com/k-12-in-topeka/in-what-other-profession](#)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shaun-johnson/treating-doctors-like-teachers_b_812096.html

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/23/education/in-obamas-race-to-the-top-work-and-expense-lie-with-states.html?pagewanted=all>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/17/nyregion/cuomo-and-bloomberg-on-attack-on-teacher-evaluations.html>

2012 WTA Election Timeline & Procedures:

- o December – January: Senior building Representatives need to provide one volunteer from each building to serve on the election committee.
- o January 23: Representative Council votes to approve the Election Committee
- o **January 23 – March 19: Open Nomination period**
- o **March 19 – early April: Candidates submit statements for publication in the Voice**
- o April 23: Candidates given time to speak at Representative Council
- o May 1—14: Voting Period, followed by counting of ballots within several days of closing
- o June 11: Elected Officers assume duties of office





The **40th Annual NYSUT Representative Assembly** will convene at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, 2012. Members make their voices heard by electing local delegates who represent them at NYSUT's annual convention, the Representative Assembly. The RA is the union's highest policy-making body, except for a membership referendum. All NYSUT members are welcome to attend the annual Representative Assembly, but only duly elected and reported delegates may debate and vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, proposed resolutions and other business that might be brought before the Representative Assembly according to NYSUT Constitution and Bylaws provisions or policy.

Adapted from the NYSUT website defining the NYSUT RA

Our 2012 WTA delegate list is:

Steven Turiano
 Jeanne Coonan
 Christine Dunne
 Kate Lasky

Jim McEntee
 Bev Voos
 Kelly Zielke

Our 2012 alternates are:

Sandy Clement
 Wendy Sardella

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

With all this talk about "The New APPR," how exactly WILL we be observed and evaluated THIS YEAR??

Article 4010 – Teacher Evaluation/Observation on pp. 17-19 of our current 2008-2012 Teachers Contract remains in effect until our successor contract is ratified by the membership and board of education.

Unit member	Number of observations	By whom
Non-tenured teacher	3 traditional observations per year	Supervising administrator(s)
Tenured Teacher	1 traditional observation per year (at least 1 x every 3 years), or 1 of the "options" listed on p 18 (Action Research, Peer observation...)	Supervising administrator
Teacher on an Improvement Plan (TIP)	<i>*teacher & WTA President will be advised first</i> Building Principal and teacher will schedule a conference to develop the plan for improvement.	Supervising administrator(s) and/or Building Principal

Additional information:

- A classroom visit by an administrator that does not result in an evaluative report or other written record shall *not be considered an observation.*
- A conference should be held within 10 days of each observation. Following this conference, the written observation report should be given to the teacher within 10 days. Within 10 days of the written report a conference can be requested by either the teacher or the administrator.
- Until the teacher can acknowledge the observation report by signing it, this written report cannot be filed in his or her personnel file.

Annual Evaluation:

- Its purpose is to discuss the staff members' performance over the school year, to review job targets & goals for the current year and to identify goals for the upcoming school year.
- As with each observation, no annual evaluation may be placed in one's personnel file until that staff member has read and signed it.

Stay informed! Make a difference! Join the e-community [NYSUT Member Action Center](#) today!

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the NYSUT Member Action Center website. The address bar shows the URL <http://mac.nysut.org/issues>. The website features a blue and red header with the NYSUT logo and the text "MEMBER ACTION CENTER". Navigation links include "ALL ACTIONS", "ONLINE MEDIA", and "RESOURCES AND LINKS". A search bar is present on the right. Below the header, a section titled "All Actions" lists several initiatives in red arrow-shaped buttons: "Defend Pensions: Oppose a New Tier VI!", "Support More Investment in Higher Education", "Ask Legislators to restore funding for our schools!", "Support increasing the minimum wage!", and "Support teacher centers!". A "Fax Legislators" link is also visible. To the right, a "DO MORE!" section encourages users to complete actions and provides social media options: "Like NYSUT Action Center on Facebook", "Alert Your Friends", and "Share this on Facebook". At the bottom of this section, it says "Join the conversation e-Activist".



It's easy to do! Go to the WTA website and sign the [online petition](#) linked right from the homepage!

NYSUT members: Are your pets protected?

As all animal lovers know, unexpected pet care expenses can quickly become overwhelming. Our favorite four-legged friends (along with exotic pets) are famous for devouring socks, coins and other “treats” that can make for expensive vet visits.

While it’s difficult to anticipate accidents and illnesses, it is important to be prepared for them. It’s also helpful to have some assistance when it comes to routine care for your pet.

NYSUT Member Benefits is here to once again help you save some hard-earned money through our new endorsed pet insurance program.

This Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed program offered by VPI Pet Insurance offers a variety of coverage options for dogs, cats, birds, and exotic pets.

The “scoop” on VPI

VPI – part of the Nationwide Insurance family – has served as the largest and most recommended pet insurance plan in the U.S. since 1982. VPI currently has nearly 500,000 policies in place and occupies 61% of the pet insurance market.

Pets under the age of 10 are eligible for coverage, and medical plans provide benefits for accidents and illnesses – ranging from ear infections to cancer. Optional CareGuard plans provide benefits for preventive care.

It pays to be a member

NYSUT members receive a 5% group discount on the base medical plan and up to a 15% discount if multiple pets in a household are enrolled. There

are a variety of payment options available, including direct bill through your checking account or credit card; payroll and pension deduction will be offered down the line.

Easy submission process

VPI offers an easy, three-step claim submission process with a prompt turnaround for the majority of reimbursements.

- Simply pay for your pet’s medical treatment at the time of service.
- Send the one-page claim form along with your receipts to VPI.
- After meeting your policy’s deductible,

your eligible expenses will be reimbursed.

Policyholders can quickly process claims online, via email or fax, and easily keep track of their policies and download pre-printed claim forms through a helpful website.

VPI has an average turnaround time of 12-14 business days for a claim. The best part is that you will know up front exactly what is covered

with your plan and how much you are eligible to be reimbursed thanks to the VPI published benefit schedule.

What to do first

To get started, please contact VPI toll-free at 866-838-3461 (this is a dedicated number for NYSUT members) or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on “Discounts & Travel – Members” and then “VPI Pet Insurance.” There, you’ll find a link to a NYSUT member-specific VPI website. You can also contact Member Benefits at **800-626-8101** with any questions.



VPI Pet Insurance is a NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5% of adjusted gross premium for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Webster Teachers' Association Upcoming Meetings
TIME: 4-6pm on Monday LOCATION: Thomas High School Library

WTA Executive Board Meeting Dates

[1st Monday of the month]

March 5, 2012

April 2, 2012

May 7, 2012

June 4, 2012

WTA Representative Council Meeting Dates

[3rd Monday of the month]

March 19, 2012

April 23, 2012

May 21, 2012

June 11, 2012



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

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<http://www.wta1972.com/>