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President's Message

The end of the calendar year will be arriving shortly. The winter break has almost arrived. A time to get together with family and friends. I would like to thank several WTA committees that have come together and worked hard on our behalf.

A special thanks goes out to our WTA APPR committee members: Monica Bays, Sarah Callahan, Jenn Cotton, Michele Farley, and Betsy Hennessey. The committee has made some minor adjustments to the APPR document as the state rejected parts of the plan submitted in June. One part that was changed was the local 20%, which we originally were going to use graduation rate, but are now using building measures. A few concerns were raised at the 3-8 grade levels about some inconsistency in the Star Reading scores. To solve this when calculating the growth score we are going to use the lowest student score in the first half of the year and the highest score in the second half of the year. This provides a fair and more accurate way to calculate students growth in grades 3-8 for the star reading assessment. At the HS level a question was asked about counting the MS students' regents scores. The MS students' scores will not be able to be counted toward the HS, however, this does not impact the overall HS local 20% score. This is because statistically there are only a few MS students who take regents as opposed to the over 2,000 regents assessments that are taking by HS students and the fact that our HS staff have done an excellent job of getting approximately 88% of our HS students to pass the regents by a score of 65 or greater. **The vote on the revised APPR document will be on Wednesday, December 12.**

Another thanks goes to our WTA Negotiation team (Marc Binsack, Phil Corleto, Michele Farley, Jay Gauthier, Heather Herendeen, Stephen Powers, Cynthia Rutan, and Eileen Zilliox) who have come to a tentative agreement for a 2 year contract extension with the District. This contract would be a repeat of the previous contract. Healthcare would remain unchanged and base salary raise would be 3% for 2013-2014 and 2% for 2014-2015. The contract ratification vote will be sometime in January. As with last time we will make the tentative contract available for viewing in your building once it has been finalized.

If you are planning on retiring at the end of the school year the deadline for submitting your letter of intent to the district in order to receive the contractual incentive is 150 days before the effective date, which would be February 1, 2013. The language in our current contract covers this school year, and the language in the proposed contract for the next 2 years does not have any changes in the retirement incentive.

Regarding taxes, for those of you who take an itemized deduction for union dues the amount you paid during the 2012 calendar year (assuming you worked full time the whole year) is \$650.46. You can check this amount paid for this tax year by checking the "DUES" and "Cal Year to Date" section on your last paycheck of 2010 (December 30th).

Happy Holidays,
Jason Carter

Volume 2 Issue 3

December 2012

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WTA Officers

Jason Carter (FE), President
Barb Thiele (OE), Internal VP
Kim Schultz (OP), External VP
Lisa Twitchell (HS), Treasurer
Faye Eaton (MS), Secretary



The 3 R's: Remarks, Reminders, and Relief!

Dates to Remember:

December 3rd Rep Council Meeting 3:45

December 5th—District Wide Meeting

December 7th—Half Day Professional Development Day



Issues Currently Being Discussed/Explored

** APPR Revote

**RC is checking into the stipend positions

**Concerns with accelerated classes **Concerns about PTC shared from all buildings

**RC looking into training for teachscape and STAR

**Concerns about subs for CSE coverage are being looked into

**RC is checking on the process/procedures in various areas

It is a greater work to educate a child, in the true and larger sense of the word, than to rule a state.

-William Ellery Channing

I wonder if Governor Cuomo has read this quote?

Those who can Teach...
Those who can't make laws about teaching!

- Acronym of the Month -

R = D x C



In this equation,
for a specific skill:

each of the letters is a variable that stands

R is a measure of reading comprehension ability.

D is a measure of decoding skills.

C is a measure of language comprehension ability as measured using a listening task.



Well it is that time of year again when as the editor I decide I can put my 2 cents in, so here it is... We are a unit, we must work together for the greater good of the whole. I am willing to go out on a limb for any one of you, however you must be willing to stand up for yourselves as well. If we want to be successful, or we want to make a change, we must be strong and stand together, or nothing will ever change. United we Stand... If you want a change, ask for it, if you are not happy about something lets see what we can do to change it. We are living in a time of tremendous change in education law. Our Solidarity is all we have to help us push back and call for change. I for one refuse to let this continue without a fight. Lets make the changes together for the greater good of the whole!

NYSUT asks it's Members to 'Tell it Like it is!'

NYSUT has been clear in its message to the state education commissioner and Board of Regents: Stop the obsession with standardized testing, invest in student learning, and devote time and resources to getting evaluations and common core right. It's been an ongoing campaign that includes our testing resolution at the RA, NYSUT's Getting It Right: Assessments Toolkit.

We've highlighted these key issues to SED and now we are asking Members can go to www.nysut.org/tellit, the "Tell it like it is" web page, to find a letter template in which you can share views and solutions on the impact of budget cuts and testing with the state's top education policymakers.

We're asking members and to take advantage of this easy-to-use communications tool to help amplify the message NYSUT leaders have delivered loudly, clearly and consistently on their behalf. Ask members to share specifics, stories from practitioners who deal with the realities every day. Tell it like it is, from the front lines of education!

Support AFT's "Learning is More Than a Test Score" effort

As a national extension of NYSUT's messaging and statewide "Tell It Like It Is" campaign to counter the obsession with standardized testing, the AFT has launched the second phase of its "Learning Is More Than a Test Score" initiative to de-emphasize testing and focus instead on student learning. Here's the [AFT press release](#).



Call Congress today!

NYSUT is asking local leaders to participate in a statewide call-in today coordinated by the State AFL-CIO. Call your representative at 888-659-9401 to let them know that NYSUT supports a fair approach to deficit reduction. Tell them:

- Let the Bush tax cuts expire for those making more than \$250,000.
- Ensure that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits are not cut and that the costs of these programs are not shifted to beneficiaries or to the states.
- Avert sequestration which would result in devastating across-the-board cuts in state aid, education, health care funding and more.
- Include components of President Obama's American Jobs Act that support job creation, retention and infrastructure investments.

Send a fax to your representative on the Fiscal Cliff here: <https://mac.nysut.org/faxlegislators/widget/issue/126>.

Share this poster from the NYSUT Action Center Facebook page with your friends, family and networks: <http://on.fb.me/Ue8sqZ>. If you are on Twitter, here are [sample tweets](#) with a link to NYSUT's share-image and the impact of drastic education cuts to New York state's teachers and students.

Visit the [AFT](#) and [NEA](#) websites to join the national effort.

Growth Reporting System: NYSUT posts primer on "How to understand your growth score"

Today, teachers are expected to be given access to their growth scores through the State Education Department portal. Here's [SED's field memo and teacher information sheet](#) on the release. We know there's a lot of anxiety out there, but you should assure your members that teachers will only have access to their own information. While SED has prepared a [nine-page explanation](#) of the growth score information available, we've put together a [two-page explainer](#) for you to share with your teachers.

Support quality education in NY: Get on a bus, or turn out for a bus stop rally, on Dec. 5

NYSUT is a founding partner of Educate New York NOW! and the union needs to support the coalition's Dec. 5 statewide rolling rally to demand a quality education for all students. Buses will leave from the North Country, Southern Adirondacks, Hamilton/Fulton/Montgomery, Hornell, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Elmira, Yonkers, Long Island and New York City, making stops along the way to Albany. At each stop the campaign will hold a press conference to discuss how students have been hurt, and to collect local scrolls with names of supporters. They will converge at the State Museum at 3 p.m. We need people to ride buses, circulate scrolls and turn out at local bus stops along the way. [Find more on the schedule and the scroll project here](#).

Planning a trip? Let Member Benefits help!

Are you finally looking to book that fantastic getaway to the Caribbean or Europe that you've always been dreaming about? Maybe you've got a business trip that you need to plan? Or, do you need to rent a car to get around town as part of your next excursion?

Let your friends at NYSUT Member Benefits help! We've got a variety of endorsed discount travel programs designed to help you keep a few more dollars in your wallet while enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

If big savings is your game, the Member Benefits-endorsed travel program offered by Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals is for you! NYSUT members can enjoy savings of up to 20% at nearly 7,000 participating hotels among 15 hotel brands with Wyndham Worldwide; meanwhile, save 25% at more than 200,000 vacation rentals in 100 countries with Endless Vacation Rentals.

Wyndham Hotels has the right hotel for you at the right price – whether it's an upscale hotel, all-inclusive resort or something more cost-effective. With Endless Vacation Rentals, NYSUT members can save on resort condos, villas, homes, and cottages that provide space and flexibility ideal for families and groups of friends traveling together.

These aren't your everyday run-of-the-mill hotel rooms! Accommodations range in size from resort studios to multi-bedroom units. And, many units feature large living rooms, dining rooms, fully-equipped kitchens, and laundry facilities.

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.

Whether you're looking for a multi-bedroom condo in Orlando or Las Vegas, or a luxurious resort in Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, or Canada, Endless Vacation Rentals offers the space and comforts-of-home to make each stay a memorable time!

Need to rent a car as part of your next trip? NYSUT members can get discounted rates on passenger car rentals with the following companies: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise,

Hertz, and National. You can even receive 20% off local or one-way truck rentals from Budget Truck Rental.

Finally, don't forget about TripMark.travel if you're looking for great deals on the most beautiful vacation spots in the world. This program provides NYSUT members and their family and

friends with online and offline (toll-free travel agents) leisure travel benefits.

TripMark.travel allows you to effortlessly book flights, hotels, vacation packages, and cruises online for personal and business travel needs. With a simple interface and advanced encryption technology, your information is safe and secure – giving you peace of mind as you plan your next trip.

Learn more about these endorsed programs – including how to access discounts, unique website codes and website links – by contacting Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org. Happy travels!

