

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

April, 2008

President's Report

This has been a unique year for us as a Union. We were faced with many challenges that had the potential to unravel our strength and voice. We faced a second year working under an expired contract. We also faced a Board of Education who was unyielding in their demands for contract concessions. In addition, we faced a health crisis for two of our officers forcing them to request a leave of absence and necessitated a transition between Presidents. Any one of these challenges had the potential to cause the Union to go backwards.

However, as we all know, we are not just any Union, we are STA! We tackled all of these obstacles head on and in the process went from a Union that was relatively "green" when it came to crisis situations to a Union that is now tested and proven true. We were successful in holding our ground because of solidarity.

Solidarity is defined as a union or fellowship arising from common responsibilities. Good things happen not because of the efforts of a few, but because of the collective efforts of all STA members. As I think back to when I was appointed as Interim President, I remember how many members said they would help out in any way needed. That is exactly what happened in the last few months. As the Crisis Committee continued to function, members wrote questions, planned unity events, created a timeline of activities, and wore t-shirts to visually demonstrate unity. The solidarity of STA members made the Union stronger. The message of solidarity is the message I would like you to think about as we continue to move forward.

As you look through the STATIC today, please pay special attention to the page about submitting your name for a building representative. Becoming a building representative is a very powerful experience. You become part of the Executive Board that acts as the governing group for your union. It is a great way to have a voice and take a leadership role for your building. Not only will you be a part of the Executive Board but work at the building level to help members understand the contract, meet with administration, and find ways to bring about change if necessary. Whether you thought of being a building representative in the past or not, take a few minutes and look at the role that you would play in that position. It is always good to see new faces and have new ideas.

If you are not interested in being a building representative, consider another way that you can get involved by becoming a mentor or through an appointed position such as an STI Policy Board Member, Political Action Coordinator, STATIC Editor, or member of STA committees. Remember, even if you become more involved even in a small way it can be very rewarding. Sometime in May you can expect to see a packet of materials that highlight the role of the different appointed paid positions - be sure to take a look at it and consider the strengths and talents you have and what you could bring to these positions. I would be happy to further talk to individuals who are interested and answer questions you may have.

I am very proud to serve you as Interim President and to say I am a member of the Schalmont Teachers' Association. Through the hard work and dedication of all the members, new friendships were formed; a better understanding of the contract language took hold and most importantly, solidarity sustained us.

In Solidarity,
Mary Beth Flatley
Interim President

1st Vice President's Report

Kelly Carroll

"On the Move" was the theme of this year's NYSUT Representative Assembly April 10-April 12, held in New York City. During the three days and evenings representing STA, Michele Williams and I had the auspicious opportunity to network with many like-minded union officials from around New York State. We attended meetings and acted on a number of resolutions, including, but not limited to federal education mandates, improvement in conditions for part-time workers, and an increase from the state in support of higher education. Other key issues we supported involved urging NYSUT to study "inflation-protectuon equity for retirees in 'optional retirement programs,' and to examine its dues structure to ensure a fair and equitable distribution among members."

NYSUT President, Dick Iannuzzi started the RA off rallying the delegates with the words, "Leadership is difficult to define but simple to recognize." He spoke to our need as educators to somehow "level the educational playing field" and attack poverty--the root cause of the gap in education." In her speech, Maria Neira urged NYSUT members to go out and "rock the boat and be at the center of change!" One of the places we rocked the boat was regarding NCLB. In fact, on Saturday a very passionate debate was had regarding a resolution opposing Federal No Child Left Behind Act Performance Pay Proposals. One NYSUT delegate called for an amendment to the NCLB resolution that would reject any form of NCLB. After input by other NYSUT delegates, the proposd amendment was defeated, but the resolution passed. In response to another issue, NYSUT members applauded as we are now on record for opposing President Bush's permanent and pre-emptive war policy.



Attorney General Andrew Cuomo addressed the delegates committing to fight against corruption in the education system, stating "we want to know that every dollar is going where it is supposed to go." He noted that he is "investigating schools across NYS that his office has found to have been siphoning education funds by hiring individual attorneys as employees, thereby entitling those attorneys to salaries and benefits." He thanked teacher for educating his children and "ensuring the promise of public education."

We were also addressed by NYS Teacher of the Year, Richard Ognibene, a physics teacher and former vice president of his local. Richard called on fellow educators to fight for young teachers and disadvantaged students. "The essence of great leadership is speaking on behalf of others." Oglibene's union worked to protect him, when he came out to his school as gay in 1994. Shortly thereafter, he formed a student group that supported gay students. "A union is at its very best when it works for social justice." Richard concluded his speech by reminding RA Delegates that we teach "because it is morally right and because at the end of the day, we change students' lives for the better."

2nd Vice President's Report

Peter Rings

Important Retirement Meeting Scheduled

Are you retiring this June? If so, you must attend an important workshop to complete the paperwork required to open your 403-b account for unused sick days.

- Monday, June 9, 2008
- 3:30 PM
- Middle School Conference Room
- Contact Pete Rings at the Middle School to confirm that you will be attending.
- His number is 355-6255 Extension 2055 or email him at prings@sabrenet.net

It is extremely important that you attend this session if you are retiring at the end of this school year that. You can only receive your money through a 403-b account by following the guidelines of the contract. All retirees should notify the district of their intention before attending this workshop. If you have not yet made your retirement decision, you may confidentially contact Pete for information. If you are unable to attend the workshop, an individual appointment must be set up with ING representative Alan Yates.



STA Congratulates:

Kelly Carroll on her recent engagement to Jim Healy. A summer wedding is being planned.



Kristen DiPiazza and her husband, Joe on the birth of their baby girl. On March 5, 2008, Kristen and Joe welcomed Maria Grace, at 7 lbs. 9 oz and 19 inches long, into their family.

Kim Knapik and her husband, Joe, on the birth of their daughter, Addisyn Marjorie. She was born April 6, 2008 weighed 7lbs. 10 oz. and was 20 inches long. She joins siblings, Avery and Aidan.



Kate Sinnott and her husband, Ken, on the birth of their little girl, Veronica Elizabeth, born April 7, 2008. Veronica measured 7lbs. 14 oz. and 20 ½ inches long.

Are you approachable, able to listen, able to solve problems and have a passion for our profession and our Union?

Have you considered running for Building Representative?

Along with the Officers, the Building Representatives make up the Executive Board of STA. According to the STA Constitution:

The Executive Board shall be responsible for conducting the routine business of the Association, review proposals submitted by the members and make recommendations for their disposition, and make recommendations relating to Association policies and programs.

The Executive Board shall outline a program for the coming year and prepare a budget therefore, the latter to be submitted to the general membership for approval at the annual meeting in May or June. The budget will be in effect from July 1 to June 30.

The Executive Board is empowered to authorize appropriate emergency expenditures which were not provided for in the annual budget

Responsibilities of Building Representatives:

- Attend monthly meetings of the STA Executive Board. These meetings are usually held the first Tuesday of the month and begin at 3:45 and last approximately 2 hours. Also attend special meetings called by the President.

- Further define and implement the vision of STA through collaboration with Executive Board members and STA members.

- Run monthly meetings in his/her individual building with STA members. At meetings, convey information from Executive Board meetings with members and answer questions members have. In addition, listen to concerns and questions of members and bring these to the President and Executive Board.

- Within the buildings, the building representatives are the contact people for members with questions and concerns related to contract issues, health and safety issues, administrative issues that impact STA members.

- Meet with other building representatives in your building to discuss items brought to you by members and things you have noticed. If you are the only building representative in your building, please feel free to talk to STA President and Executive Board.

- Meet with administrators on a regular basis to address questions and discuss concerns and comments about things happening in the buildings.

- Distribute and collect mailings, information and materials to and from members.

Election of STA Building Representatives

In accordance with the STA Constitution, the following calendar has been established for electing Building Representatives for 2008-2009. There are no Officer positions on the ballot this year because their two-year terms expire in 2009.

Friday, May 16, 2008 Last day for names to be submitted to the Election Committee for consideration as a candidate for STA Building Representative.

Thursday, June 5, 2008 STA Annual Meeting (Candidates will have the opportunity to speak to the membership at this meeting.)

Friday, June 13, 2008 Election of STA Building Representatives will take place in all buildings.

I am interested in running for the position of STA Building Representative
(1 year term) at:

_____ Jefferson
_____ Woestina
_____ Mariaville

_____ Middle School
_____ High School

Name _____

Send completed form to Sarah Mattice, Election Committee Chairperson, at the High School.



STA General Membership Meeting

Annual Business Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Middle School LGI Room

3:45 PM

Agenda

1. Secretary's Report
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Vice Presidents' Reports
4. President's Report
5. STA Election Committee Report
6. STI Report
7. Mentor Program Report
8. Approval of 2008-2009 STA Budget
9. Member Concerns

Early Planning is Key to Successful Retirement

You just began teaching or have been in the field for a few years. Your life consists of work, finishing up your M.S, family obligations, and perhaps a little fun time. Why should you think of retirement when you are only 26 (or younger...or older)?

It is never too early to begin planning for that day 30 years down the road. As a member of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, you belong to one of the largest and strongest pension funds in the U.S. Your benefits are guaranteed by the state constitution, and NYSTRS accumulates assets throughout your career to pay for those benefits for the rest of your life. But will it be enough? Experts say that you will need at least 80% of your pre-retirement income to enjoy the same standard of living after retiring. Your pension, alone, may not be enough to provide this security. Since everyone's lifestyle is different, all of us will have different needs for income. But generally, you should consider three main sources of income:

Pension: Your pension may be the largest part of your retirement income. But pension amounts can vary greatly based on factors such as final average salary, service credit and age at retirement. The Benefit Profile can help.

- Review your salary and service credit information. Report any discrepancies to the District Office.
 - o Your Profile will show your total service credit as of the end of the previous school year
 - o Your pension formula depends on your tier. Teachers hired after 9/1/83 are Tier 4.

•Know the impact that reaching key service milestones can have on your benefits and plan accordingly. You can receive partial credit by working at least 20 full days in a school year.

Social Security: This is the main source of income for most Americans age 65 or older. The Social Security Administration (SSA) also sends you annual statement three months before your birthday showing your expected benefit.

•Your benefit is based on your 35 highest years of Social Security earnings. If you have fewer than 35 years when your benefits begin, your benefit will be adjusted.

•You can receive benefits as early as 62 or wait until full retirement age (65-67 based on the year you were born). Your monthly benefit will be higher if you wait, but it may take many years to make up for the payments you missed.

Personal Investments: Even though you may have a solid foundation from your NYSTRS pension and Social Security, your personal investments could be the deciding factor in how comfortable a retirement you can afford.

•To benefit from compounding, start an investment plan as soon as possible, even if you can only set aside a small amount.

•Take advantage of tax-deferred investments such as 403(b) or 457 plans. These plans allow you to contribute before taxes are taken out of your earnings, which leaves you more money to invest and reduces your current taxable income.

•Diversify among investment types (stocks, bonds, real estate) and investment approaches (growth vs. value; large vs. small cap funds)

•If all this is Greek to you consider using a Certified Financial Planner to assess your financial condition and propose an investment approach to meet your goals.

Expenses: Compare your expected retirement income to expenses you anticipate in retirement.

•Consider everyday expenses (mortgage/rent, insurance, taxes, electricity, fuel, water, food, phone, cable, internet) and expenses that may change significantly after you retire (travel, entertainment, transportation, medical). If you plan to relocate or spend part of the year away from home, factor in those costs as well.

•Don't forget the hidden expense of inflation. Expenses go up, so the buying power of your income goes down. (If you retired in 2000, the average price of a gallon of gas in the U.S. was \$1.52. In just 7 years, the price has more than doubled (almost 125%!))

Ultimately, you hold the key to how financially secure you are in retirement. Planning is important and the Benefit Profile is an excellent tool to help in your preparation.

Source: NYSTRS 2007 Annual Delegates Meeting Presentation, November, 2007/Carol Carelli, Schalmont NYSTRS Representative

STA Executive Board Minutes February 2, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 3:48 P.M.

Approval on minutes from January 8 and January 15 meetings

Motion to accept made by Kelly Carroll. Seconded by Carol Kramer. Motion approved.

Discussion of Reorganization

- Paid vs. unpaid leaves

Mary Beth recommended that we NOT fill the Executive Vice President position at this time.

- President's position - suggestion that we pro-rate the position for the year. Alisha would receive 7/12 of the stipend and Mary Beth would receive 6/12 of the stipend (overlap due to transition)

Motion made by Chris Bailey to pro-rate the stipend. Seconded by Pete Rings. Motion approved.

Discussion of Treasurer's position - Jim Scott will pay the bills. There will be three people who will be able to sign checks (Alisha, Jim and MaryBeth). Jim will also prepare the budgets but does not want to attend meetings. Mary Beth will continue to do some of the duties as the year ends (tax preparation, etc.)

- Discussion of salary for Jim Scott will be tabled until the March meeting.
- Expense forms will now go to Jim Scott. Carol Carelli will change the website to reflect this change

Motion to approve Jim as Interim Treasurer made by Mike Foley. Seconded by Chris Bailey. Motion approved

Crisis Committee Report - Kevin Meachem

- Discussion of Building Rep. responsibilities vs. Crisis committee liaisons
- Suggested that crisis committee liaisons speak with building reps on a regular basis
- Suggest that there be an STA meeting after the February 6 Faculty meetings. Liaisons will be handing out calendar of events. Check personal calendars.
- Mike Foley will be meeting with Jefferson teachers on February 7 and with Schalmont teachers living in the district on February 12. Will schedule meetings with the other two buildings when he returns from vacation.
- Discussion of picketing at HS/MS
- A survey has been put into teachers' mailboxes. The information gathered will be used for the letter writing committee.
- Building Reps should encourage all teachers to attend the BOE meeting on Monday, February 11.
- Continued discussion of general membership meeting. Mary Beth Flatley will address the membership on February 11 before the BOE meeting.

STA Executive Board Minutes (continued)

February 2, 2008

Negotiations Update - Mike Foley

- Fact-finding on January 28, BOE presented data to the team - only Mike Foley attended.
- Number of issues still on the table - discussion that the only union item on the table was salary. Reitz wanted to deal with all of the un-addressed issues
- District presented an extensive compilation of "facts and figures"
- Decision of the fact finder, which should be available in about 6 weeks, is not binding.
- Mike handed out figures to support the STA's position as to the ability of the district to pay, comparisons of other salary schedules and health benefits, income per pupil and consumer price index, etc.

Building Issues

- Reps from Jefferson indicated there was a situation last week when there was no power from 11:15 am until the end of the day. However they still brought the PM Kindergarteners in. Questions regarding student safety, communication with teachers, problems during the lunch periods, health issues, and no lights in the bathrooms were addressed. Suggestion made to have the building reps speak with Joby Gifford to find out what the rationale was for keeping the building open and what other solutions could have been used.
- There is a concern about the district allowing teachers a finite amount of money to purchase supplies for students. The district wants to provide school supplies for students but that is having an effect on the supplies that individual teachers can purchase. They are only allowed \$200 per teacher and that amount will not cover all the expenses that individual teachers need in their classrooms.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 P.M. was made by Kelly Carroll. Seconded by Kevin Meachem. Motion carried.

STA Executive Board Meeting

February 26, 2008

Special Meeting

Members Present: Mary Beth Flatley, Interim President/Treasurer; Alisha Bahrmann, President; Michele Williams, Executive VP; Pete Rings, 2nd VP; Carol Carelli, Secretary; Chris Bailey, Jason Beck, Kevin Meachem (HS); Deborah D'Arcangelis, Mike DiCocco, Joann Lasky, Jeff VanHoesen (MS); Lori Bittner, Kathy Cathell, Sue Hennessy, Carol Kramer (Jefferson); Katie LeRoy (Woestina); Kim Knapik (Mariaville) Absent: Kelly Carroll, 1st VP; Mike Foley, Retiree Rep; Carol Russell (HS)

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 P.M.

Motion was made to go to Executive Session by Kathy Cathell. Seconded by Deborah D'Arcangelis. Motion carried.

Motion made to move out of Executive session made by Lori Bittner. Seconded by Kim Knapik. Motion carried.

Motion made to adjourn made by Carol Kramer. Seconded by Carol Carelli. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

STA Executive Board March 6, 2008

Members Present: Mary Beth Flatley, Interim President; Alisha Bahrmann, President; Michele Williams, Executive VP; Kelly Carroll, First VP; Peter Rings, 2nd VP, Carol Carelli, Secretary; Chris Bailey, Jason Beck, Kevin Meachem, Carol Russell, (HS); Deborah D'Arcangelis, JoAnn Lasky, Jeff Van Hoesen, (MS); Lori Bittner, Kathy Cathell, Carol Kramer, (Jefferson); Katie LeRoy (Woestina); Kim Knapik (Mariaville). Members Absent: Mike DiCocco, Michael Foley, Sue Hennessy
The meeting was called to order at 3:45 P.M.

Secretary Report - Carol Carelli

- Motion to accept minutes from February 5 and February 26 (special meeting) made by Kelly Carroll. Seconded by Deborah D'Arcangeils. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report - Mary Beth Flatley

- February budget was handed out

Motion made by Kevin Meachem to move into Executive Session to discuss negotiations. Seconded by Katie LeRoy. Motion carried.

Motion to move out of Executive Session made by Kelly Carroll. Seconded by Kevin Meachem. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn at 5:51 P.M. made by Kim Knapik. Seconded by Chris Bailey. Motion carried.

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Kooky Cartoon



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