

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

President's Report

January/February 2010

A leader is a visionary: someone who has a clear, vivid picture of where to go, a firm grasp on what success looks like and knows how to achieve it. But it's not enough to have vision; leaders must also share it and act upon it. Members of the School-Level Facilitation team are leaders.

You have had the opportunity to read the information that outlines the expectations of the School-Level Facilitation Teams. The primary purpose of the School-Level Facilitation team is to provide the leadership, guidance and support for creating appropriate opportunities for the meaningful involvement of staff and parents in the school's planning and decision-making processes.

The teams will be an integral part of the decision-making process at the building level. Depending on the issue, each team will reach out to other people to help make sound decisions for each building. They will rely on the expertise of each other as they gather information and discuss the issue(s) in order to make recommendations regarding the five major school-level operations.

Shortly we will be selecting the school-level teams. Teachers who are interested in participating on this team in year one of the process may submit an application to me and I will make recommendations for approval of the Executive Board. In year two, the Executive Board will solicit feedback at the building level for the suggestions about the selection process of the School-Level Facilitation Teams. The feedback will be gathered from all buildings and a document will be created to outline the process of selecting teams from year two and beyond.

Our STA membership is comprised of many talented and visionary professionals, in the classroom as well as non-teaching professionals. Participation on the Building Level teams will not only provide the opportunity for getting involved in making decisions, but will also teach us the broader understanding of the responsibilities which come with leadership. The more understanding we have of an issue from a global perspective, as well as from the classroom perspective, the greater the ability we have to make positive changes for all.

If you are interested in being a teacher member of the school-level facilitation team, complete the application that will be provided in the next few weeks. Once team members are selected, members will participate in a special orientation session in April and additional training sessions in early summer. This is a great opportunity to have your voice heard. Although it requires us to step outside the box, many changes can be made that can help our students become more successful.

Over the next few weeks, please give some thought to getting involved. This is your chance to be heard...to make a difference...to lead.

In solidarity,
Mary Beth Flatley

Certification News

Kelly Healy, First Vice President

When Were You Certified in New York State?

Are you considered newly certified (this is any member certified after February 2, 2004)? If so, you received an Initial Certificate that has or will become a Professional Certificate once you meet all requirements. You need to remain diligent about protecting your certification by reviewing the following information. If you haven't already done so, open a TEACH online account to apply for your certificate(s) and to check and manage the status of your applications. To set up a TEACH account, visit the following link:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/selfreg.html>

Types of Teaching Certificates

The information below describes the types of teaching certificates offered in New York.

Initial Certificate

Description: The entry-level certificate for classroom teachers, issued in specific subject/grade titles, and the entry-level certificate for School Building Leaders.

Validity: Valid for five years.

Leads to: Professional Certificate

Professional Certificate

Description: The advanced-level certificate for classroom teachers (issued in specific subject/grade titles) and School Building Leaders.

Validity: Continuously valid with completion of required professional development hours on a five-year professional development cycle.

Provisional Certificate

Description: The entry-level certificate for pupil personnel professionals, issued in specific subject/grade titles. Previously, the entry-level certificate for classroom teachers, but discontinued as of February 2, 2004. (Previously, the entry-level certificate discontinued as of September 2, 2007).

Validity: Valid for five Years

Leads to: Permanent Certificate

Permanent Certificate

Description: The advanced-level certificate for pupil personnel professionals. The Permanent certificate also remains the advanced-level certificate for classroom teachers and school administrators who hold a valid Provisional certificate.

Validity: Valid for life, unless revoked for cause by the New York State Education Department

Certification News (continued)

It is up to each individual teacher to ensure the minimum of 175 hours of professional development in the course of five years from your certification start date has been met. The district provides four staff development days per year (these are approximately 6 hour days—meaning if you attend all four over the course of five years, you have obtained about 120 hours and need an additional 55). You can get the additional hours by taking advantage of professional development opportunities through STI, a professional conference, an approved college course, or through NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust (www.nysut.org/elt).

I strongly encourage all Professional Certificate and Level III Teaching Assistant Certificate holders to view your professional development hours which are reported by the school district via the TEACH account. Also, verify information at the TEACH site against your personal records to be sure the hours have been accurately reported by the district. The maintenance of your certification is dependent on it.

Are you a Provisional Certificate holder and have questions? To see a list of frequently asked questions, go to the following state education website:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/faqcertpp.html>.

Have you had any problems with using TEACH? If so, go to:

<https://portals.nysed.gov/tcert/technical.htm>.

As reported in a recent NYSUT News Wire - January 6, 2010 NYS goes online-only for time-limited certificates

The New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) will discontinue the printing of time-limited certificates (Initial, Supplementary, Teaching Assistant Level I and II) on February 1, 2010. Instead, certification status will be verified via TEACH online services. Certificates that do not expire (Permanent, Professional, and Teaching Assistant Level III) will continue to be printed and mailed to applicants.

OTI has informed districts and BOCES that "Online verification of an employment applicant's certification status should be used in lieu of printed certificates for current, and potential, employees." The discontinuation of printing and mailing time-limited certificates is expected to save the state money and free staff to work on evaluating applications.



Planning for Retirement Begins Early

Pete Rings, 2nd Vice President

Many of us do not think about retirement when we first enter education; after all, we have a pension plan. With people living longer in retirement, 403(b) accounts can prove to be very valuable not only as a supplemental retirement income, but as an inflation cushion as well, and the earlier in your career that you set up a retirement plan, the more money you will accumulate to supplement your pension.

A 403(b) account is a retirement savings plan available for public education organizations and some other non-profit employers in the United States. The tax treatment is similar to a 401(k) plan. In other words, the contributions you make into your 403(b) plan are made before income tax is paid. Contributions and earnings on investments grow, tax deferred until the time of retirement, when withdrawals are taxed as ordinary income.



There are a number of websites STA members can visit to become more informed about 403(b) accounts.

The link to www.403bwise.com on the STA "Retirement Info" webpage (click on "Financial Planning Resources") provides a wealth of information regarding setting up a 403(b) account. Another resource is the Onmi Group website (www.omni403b.com). This is the company that manages 403(b) accounts for the Schalmont District. On the Omni Group site, there is a list of the 14 accepted vendors that you can have contributions made by payroll deduction into your 403(b) account. If you follow the "CLIENT" link on the left sidebar" to "Client Home Page" and click on Schalmont, you can retrieve this information.

Sales representatives should not be roaming the building and approaching you with unsolicited information, nor should they be contacting you at home without your permission. If this happens to you, contact your Principal or Building Representative.



55/25 Legislation Approves Early Retirement Without Penalty

The governor has approved legislation to allow NYSUT members who have reached the age of 55 with at least 25 years service to retire without penalty. There will be a three-month window, to be determined, during the 2010 calendar year. Below is the excerpt from the Tier V legislation signed by the governor. The complete bill can be found on the Governor's website. (Assembly Bill A40026 or Senate Bill S66026)

"The legislature hereby finds and declares its intent, in addition to the retirement benefit changes provided for in this act, to enact legislation, in conjunction with the executive, which would offer a three-month period during calendar year 2010, during which members of the collective bargaining unit of the New York State United Teachers ("NYSUT") within the New York state teachers retirement system and the New York state and local employees' retirement system who have reached fifty-five years of age and have accumulated twenty-five years of service as a member of either such retirement system, may retire early without penalty. This act shall take effect January 1, 2010; provided, however, that the amendments to subdivision a of section 603 of the retirement and social security law made by section seven of this act, shall not affect the expiration of such subdivision and shall be deemed to expire therewith."

Vote-Cope Perspective

Joann Perillo-Lasky - Political Action Coordinator

INVESTMENTS? The stock market is shaky, bonds are shaky, and banks are shaky. IS THERE AN INVESTMENT OUT THERE THAT HAS HAD A PROVEN TRACK RECORD? You might be inclined to say no, but you would be wrong. Dollar for dollar, VOTE-COPE is the best investment a Schalmont teacher can make. We reap incredible benefits from the work that VOTE-COPE does for our profession.

STA members should be aware that, in these financially uncertain times, Vote - Cope donations are used to protect our profession. When times are tough, schools are one of the first places that go under the budgetary cutting knife. We need the political clout that VOTE-COPE provides in order to preserve the benefits and programs we currently enjoy. VOTE-COPE political action has won many hard-fought battles and now, more than ever, we need to show our support with continued or increased contributions.

When your union representative comes to see you about contributing, please do so, because every dollar you contribute is working hard for you. Look at just one example and do the math: Thanks to the lobbying efforts of VOTE-COPE, Tier 3 and Tier 4 people no longer have to contribute 3% toward their pensions after 10 years in the system. That is HUGE! The money in your pocket due to this effort alone far exceeds the \$3.00 per pay period we are asking that our members contribute.

Our goal is to have every STA member contribute to VOTE-COPE this year. Please don't sit on the sidelines; join your colleagues and contribute. We are in a serious battle to preserve and protect our benefits. Educators need a strong voice and VOTE-COPE is that voice.

I would like to take a moment and give a **BIG SHOUT OUT** to all the members who have been contributing to VOTE-COPE. We are close to 100% participation. GO SCHALMONT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION!!

VOTE-COPE is a non-partisan political action arm of NYSUT. VOTE-COPE monies support candidates of all parties. Endorsements are based on voting records that support education, labor, health care and working family issues.

Achievements gained through the efforts of VOTE-COPE political action:

- Annual battle for better funding of public education & healthcare programs
- Year after year, restoration of education budget cuts proposed by the governor
- Every year, work to protect retiree health insurance benefits
- Fight to protect tenure rights
- Permanent annual COLA in TRS & ERS pensions
- Retirement incentives
- Pension enhancements for Tier 3 & 4, such as elimination of 3% contribution after 10 years



Join your colleagues in supporting our profession. When your building representative approaches you, consider increasing your donation or make the decision to join those whose efforts protect us all.

Sarah Mattice and Tracy Pontin Achieve National Board Teacher Certification

Congratulations to our two newest recipients of National Board Teacher Certification, both high school English teachers. This accomplishment is a testament to the types of teachers that work here at Schalmont. Their perseverance and dedication to the profession cannot be understated. We invited each of them to respond to the challenge and to give their views on the process and what it meant to them to achieve this certification.

Sarah Mattice's Thoughts



I refer to it as the "Sunday Night Blues." Towards the end of the weekend I stare at my schoolbag filled with essays to grade and lessons to plan. It is a dreadful feeling. Over the last few years, I started to feel like every day was a Sunday night. At first I equated this lackadaisical sentiment and spirit to pressures of state mandates, and even the weakened morale from contract negotiations. I felt unappreciated, devalued, and defeated. Some days I blamed it on my frustration from budget cuts. Maybe, I even thought, it is just students' growing apathy to read and write. Mix work-related stresses with family ones—losing my mother to breast cancer before my wedding; praying for a safe return home from my brother-in-law fighting in Iraq— and it becomes even more difficult to 'perform' in our jobs. Yet, somehow, we still do.

When I was in college I had that "I-am-going-to-change-public-education" mentality. Energy and excitement about planning, teaching, and grading felt fresh. The profession seemed manageable, and I remember thinking to myself that I would never become an ineffective, burned-out teacher. This naïve optimism, I now realize, was dramatically clouded by my inexperience. Talking about teaching and being able to successfully manage a classroom

are two entirely different things. Although our jobs are rewarding, our profession entails exhaustion—mentally, physically, and emotionally. Perhaps this is why national statistics still suggest that most teachers burn out after only five years. So, why did I choose to pursue my National Boards if I felt so exhausted already? Honestly, I initially thought immersing myself in this process would be my excuse to avoid the toxic issues I was powerless to change. What I gained, however, was more valuable than I had anticipated.

Engaging in the National Board process has been both humbling and introspective. It has helped me to feel recharged, rejuvenated, and refocused. Furthermore, this process has reinforced for me who I am as a teacher, what I want to be, and how I will focus on my students in order to impact their growth and learning. More importantly, it has reminded me how important it is to reflect on my teaching practice—to adapt, adjust, and alter my methods when I feel like they are not working.

I sincerely appreciate the support and encouragement from so many people: my husband and family, the STI, Ann Schulman, Bronson Knaggs, Kevin Curtin, Beth Symons, Elisa Pepe, Ellen Bedell, Amy Glick, and Terry Nash. I also want to thank Tracy Pontin for working with me throughout this entire process. We attended numerous conferences together; wrote, drafted, and edited each others' work; analyzed our practice and methodologies; studied, etc. I am blessed to have been able to complete this process with a trustworthy friend and competent co-worker who cared about my progress and success as much as her own.



Tracy Pontin's Reflections

I'm not really sure how the whole prospect came about. It seemed like one minute I was casually batting around the idea of National Boards with Sarah in her classroom and the next we were at a Summer Institute on the National Board Certification process at Rensselaerville pouring over a tome of the national standards in English Language Arts for Adolescents and Young Adults. Anyone who has ever looked at the NBC standards and the instructions knows what a daunting and intimidating experience it can be, but the more I read, the more I thought about the ways in which my classroom practice intersected with the philosophies espoused by the National Board. I realized going through the process would be work (to say the least) but it would give me a great opportunity to reflect on my teaching and to think about how what I do in the classroom impacts student learning.

As teachers, I think we often tend to look outward. We look outward to the sea of close to thirty faces in front us in our classes. We look outward to how the social, cultural and political climate of the time will impact our students. We look outward to see how our students measure up to their peers in this and other districts. The National Board process encouraged me to look inward at my practice and think critically about student learning in positive, measurable ways.

I became a teacher long before videotaping entered the norm, so until I went through the National Board process, I had never seen myself teach, and for a person who can't stand to hear herself on an answering machine, the prospect of analyzing my teaching on video was less than enjoyable. Luckily, it wasn't as daunting as I had anticipated. I had heard numerous horror stories about candidates taping themselves ad infinitum, so I promised myself I wouldn't inflict that torture on myself. I planned to tape one class for one week and let the chips fall where they may. Here's how the week went. Day one: great lesson. I thought to myself mid-lesson "Who needs to tape for a week! This is it. The moon must be in the seventh house; Jupiter must be aligned with Mars..." Unfortunately, the tape was inaudible because I wasn't using an external microphone. Day two: another good lesson. The kids were engaged and lively, but out of nowhere, a student said, "I know this is off topic Mrs. Pontin, but we were talking at lunch, and is it true that you used to work

at Lincoln High School in Brooklyn before you came to Schalmont?" In one swift sentence she blew the confidentiality of candidacy clear out of the water right smack in the middle of the tape and rendered the day's tape obsolete. Day three: 12 out of 17 kids went on a field trip and neglected to remind me the day before. That left days four and five. I went with day four, a poetry lesson. I'm guessing it was a good choice.

It would not be an understatement to say pursuing my National Boards was, although arduous and stressful at times, the most meaningful, effective and applicable professional development experience in which I have been engaged throughout my career, but it was by no means a solo endeavor. I am indebted to Sarah, whose unwavering support kept me sane throughout this process. I couldn't have asked for a better partner with whom to go through this experience as she was truly as invested in my achieving as I was. Secondly, I am thankful for wonderful colleagues in the Schalmont community, both those who have gone through the National Board process and gave so freely of their time and advice and those who have not, but who recognized it as a tremendous undertaking and offered endless encouragement. I appreciate the support of the STI which was always willing to assist me in any way I deemed necessary. I am grateful to Mr. Nash whose support and recognition validated the importance of this process. Finally, my achieving wouldn't have been possible without support of my husband and daughters, who are really happy to no longer have to tiptoe past our home office on weekends whispering, "Shhhh...Mommy's working on her National Boards."



National Board Certification Online Resources



- To get started, visit the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Web site at www.nbpts.org
- Visit the new NBC page which offers important links. www.nysut.org/nationalboard
- NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust (www.nysut.org/elt) offers support programs for inservice or graduate credit. Check with STI center or www.teachercenter.org.
- A useful resource for candidates is NEA/AFT's "Guide to National Board Certification" can be downloaded: www.nea.org/tools/15895.htm.

New York State offers fee support--\$2,500--through the the union-backed Albert Shanker grant for eligible school teachers.

Wedding Bands and Babies

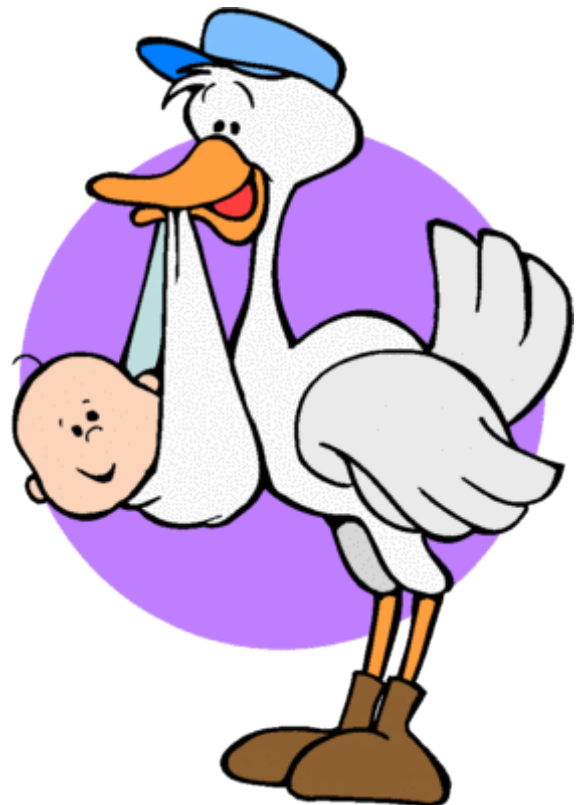


Congratulations and best wishes to Adam Labuda and Carrie Shapiro (both teachers at the high school) on their recent engagement. They are planning a wedding for June 27th.

Brian Croote (Jefferson) and his wife, Melanie are the proud parents of baby girl, Samantha Ann Croote, who was born on New Year's Eve 2009. Samantha has two big brothers,

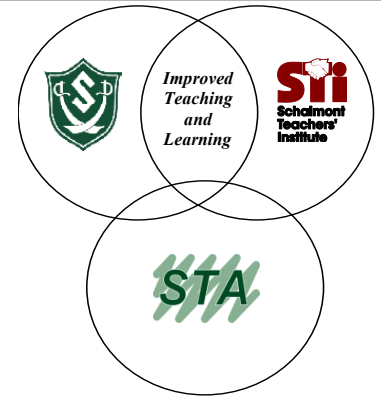
Matthew, 5 and Benjamin, 3. Congratulations, Brian and Melanie!

Addison Leigh Moore, daughter of Joy (Woestina) and Kevin Moore, was 5 lbs. 9 oz. and was 18.5 inches long at birth, on January 12, 2010.



IDEA

INNOVATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT



What is an IDEA Grant?

An IDEA Grant is a written proposal for an innovative approach to learning that strives to meet the NYS Standards and increase student performance and learning. IDEA Grants may also be awarded for an individual expression of educational expertise or learning experiences that renew a professional, thereby enhancing learning conditions and outcomes for students. The grant application is submitted to a committee of teachers and administrators for review, evaluation, and analysis.

There are two types of IDEA Grants:

Traditional Grants have a maximum award limit of \$10,000.

An interview with the IDEA Grant Committee is required.

Mini-Grants have a maximum award limit of \$2,500.

An interview with the IDEA Grant Committee is *not* required.

Who can apply for an IDEA Grant?

Individuals or groups of teachers who are members of the Schalmont Teachers' Association bargaining unit are eligible to apply for **one** IDEA Grant each school year. Grant recipients, who do not successfully complete their IDEA Grant as per the IDEA Grant application procedures and guidelines, are not eligible for any future grants. There will be no deadline extensions.

Where can I get an application?

Grant applications are available online from the STA Website, www.schalmontta.org. Applicants must follow the steps outlined in the IDEA Grant Application and submit the application to the IDEA Grant Committee prior to application deadlines. Failure to follow guidelines as outlined could result in the application being returned or denied.

2010 Spring

Application Deadline: February 26, 2010

Interviews: March 9 & 11, 2010

Completed Grants Due: May 28, 2010

2009-2010
IDEA Grant Committee Members

Susan Cook, Jackie Gordon, Jason Thompson,
Elisa Pepe, Wendy Stearns, and
Kelly Healy (Chairperson)

Is it time for a financial tune-up?

Have you ever asked yourself these questions?

- Should I refinance my mortgage?
- Am I saving enough for my children's education?
- What is the best way to reduce my debt?
- Is my 403(b) retirement account invested properly?

If yes, you could benefit by enrolling in the Financial Counseling Program recently endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation.

For an annual fee, you'll get unbiased, objective advice from financial professionals who do not sell any financial products. The Financial Counseling Program is provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc., an investment advisory company.

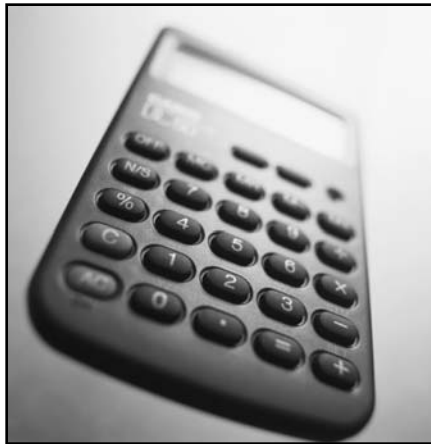
Its certified financial planners and registered investment advisors provide fee-based professional financial counseling; they receive no commissions from mutual funds, brokerage firms, insurance companies or any other third party.

The **Full-Service Financial Counseling Program** includes several features. You can consult with a planner or advisor toll-free for up to six hours per year. If a planner or advisor is not available when you call, you can schedule a phone consultation at a time convenient for you.

You can request no-cost written summaries and reports on a variety of financial issues. You can receive assistance in choosing a 403(b) retirement savings program provider available

through your employer, as well as assistance on reviewing your 403(b) investment selections.

You'll gain access to Stacey Braun's password-protected Web site, which is chock-full of tips, narratives, market data, quotes, charts, news, calculators, an interactive financial planner, useful Web site links and more. There's even an e-mail helpdesk where you can get answers to basic financial questions within 24 hours.



If Stacey Braun holds an educational workshop in your area, the admission fee will be waived if you wish to attend. Also, you can request an in-person consultation with a Stacey Braun planner at a mutually agreed-upon location. This service is limited to 90 minutes and carries an additional fee.

If you only desire advice regarding 403(b) retirement savings programs, the **403(b) Limited Financial Counseling Program** is available at a reduced price. This option includes toll-free phone consultations to discuss 403(b) programs only (six-hour limit) and assistance in selecting a 403(b) program provider available through your employer, as well as assistance with investment allocation of 403(b) assets. Web site access, e-mail helpdesk and in-person consultations are not included in the limited plan.

For information on this and other programs, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, call us at **800-626-8101** weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or use the **Contact** feature on our Web site.



The Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. Financial Counseling Program is a NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Under an agreement with Stacey Braun, Member Benefits has an expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangement of 10% of annual participation fees received plus \$9 per direct bill participant. 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.

STA Executive Board Meeting, October 6, 2009

Members Present: Mary Beth Flatley, President; Kelly Healy, 1st Vice President; Pete Rings, 2nd Vice President; Carol Carelli, Secretary; Alisha Couse, Treasurer; Kathy Cathell, Deborah D'Arcangelis, Michael Foley, Kim Knapik, Joann Lasky, Mike Libertucci, Kevin Meachem, Carol Russell, Mary Zanta **Absent:** Bob Anderson, Chris Bailey, Lori Bittner, Cori Kinns, Fred Orlando, Carol Walker

The meeting was called to order at 3:45 P.M.

Motion to accept the September 2, 2009 minutes with corrections made by Kelly Healy. Seconded by Joann Lasky. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Alisha Couse

- A new refrigerator, printer and other equipment was purchased for the new president
- Distributed budget as of October, 2009

Secretary's Report – Carol Carelli

- A card was sent to Melanie Dorrance
- Reminded building reps to let secretary know if a member should receive a card due to illness, wedding, engagement, new baby, etc.
- Reminded High School reps to check with those members who have not yet handed in their STA data sheets

1st Vice President's Report – Kelly Healy

- Remind teachers to use the documentation form to track certification hours for staff development. Make copies of everything including course and workshop completion certificate before sending to Wendy Dixon at the district office. The folder distributed at the beginning of the year is a good place to hold this documentation.
- APPR – Kelly has been getting a lot of questions regarding goal setting for the 3rd year – teachers are reporting that they feel the observation remarks by administrators are not related to the lesson which was taught during the observation.
- Kelly and Mary Beth met with the nurses – discussed differences between the hourly positions they had (before joining the teacher's unit) vs. the salaried position. They were also unclear about the amount of duty-free time they are allowed. It was noted that some nurses are choosing not to take the 30 minute lunch, but all are entitled to 30 minutes of duty-free lunch daily. There is also still a problem in the MS/HS with getting substitutes for nurses.

President's Report – Mary Beth Flatley

- The district is hiring an LPN for Jefferson for 2 hrs. /day. This position will be a part of the bargaining unit and salary will be on the Teacher Assistant schedule. A job description will be developed.
- Attendance Record – all members should have received an expanded attendance report from the district office. Make sure that you check it carefully against your own records of absences from last year. If there is a discrepancy, contact Laura Hungershafer. It is a good idea for all members to make a personal note of any absences due to illness, out of building meetings, workshops, conferences each year.
- Teachers also have the option of NOT reporting a medical procedure (mammogram, etc.) if you use a sick day. However, all members are allowed ½ day leave for mammograms without charging it to their sick time allotment, but they must provide documentation to the District Office.
- Divulging information regarding H1N1 – Teachers are not required to divulge flu-like symptoms to the district. However, the Health Department is trying to track instances of the flu, but members can still choose not to report.

STA Executive Board Meeting, October 6, 2009 (continued)

- Hand sanitizers will be distributed to all classrooms - non- alcohol
- Flu shot clinic? – There have been some discussions but no decisions have been made to have a clinic on campus.
- Energy – concerns about the energy mandate regarding teachers being asked to take home appliances – If teachers feel there is a “need”, the issue will be re-visited. Principals will address the concerns and may designate centralized parts of the building for appliance use.
- Breast Cancer “Making Strides” Walk – October 18, 2009. If anyone is interested in participating or making a donation, contact Lorinda Gandrow or Melissa West. STA is providing transportation and t-shirts.
- Golf Tournament – The Schalmont Athletic Association Golf Tournament was moved to a Sunday this year and had less teacher/coach participation, perhaps due to the day or cost (\$125). They will try to do a bowling tournament in January and are looking to increase teacher participation.
- Tenure Bags – Building reps should distribute the bags at the monthly faculty meetings.
- STI – Staff Development Day – October 23, 2009 – Discussion about whether STA will provide lunch this time (pizza and salad). Talked about it being a good idea but decided to wait for a staff day that does not have members split throughout the day (elementary ½ day for conferences, MS/HS various professional development).
- The last Staff Development Day is scheduled for Good Friday – Teachers are reminded that if they are taking a personal day on that day, they need to notify their building principals (day before a holiday).
- Student Teachers – Student teachers are not allowed to use district computers unless they have completed an AUA. Personal passwords should not be given to student teachers. They will be given their own account upon receipt of the AUA.
- Valerie has asked teachers to try to reduce the amount of time using the district computers for personal use. This is an effort to reduce the bandwidth which affects the speed of our network. If bandwidth can be reduced the district will be able to open up YouTube.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) –Teacher tutoring during prep time

- Motion made to approve the MOU – Pete Rings. Seconded by Joann Lasky. Motion carried.

Executive Session – Motion made to move to Executive Session made by Kelly Healy. Seconded by Kathy Cathell. Motion Carried.

Motion made to move out of Executive Session made by Joan Lasky. Seconded by Kathy Cathell. Motion carried.

Due to the late hour, the following items were tabled until the November 2, 2009 meeting:

- Meeting Attendance
- Shared Decision Making Update
- Monthly meeting with Administration
- Building Concerns

Motion made to adjourn meeting made by Kelly Healy. Seconded by Kevin Meachem. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

STA Executive Board Meeting, November 2, 2009

Members Present: Mary Beth Flatley, President; Kelly Healy, 1st Vice President; Pete Rings, 2nd Vice President; Carol Carelli, Secretary; Alisha Couse, Treasurer; Bob Anderson, Chris Bailey, Lori Bittner, Kathy Cathell, Deborah D’Arcangelis, Michael Foley, Cori Kinns, Kim Knapik, Mike Libertucci, Fred Orlando, Carol Walker, Mary Zanta **Members Absent:** Joann Lasky, Kevin Meachem, Carol Russell

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

Motion to accept the minutes of the October 6, 2009 meeting with changes made by Kim Knapik. Seconded by Deborah D’Arcangelis. Motion carried

Treasurer’s Report – Alisha Couse

- Distributed as of 11/2/2009
- STA is preparing for the tax season. Jeff Donofrio will be doing our taxes this year. There will also be an internal audit performed by at least 2 neutral people with guidelines from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

Secretary’s Report – Carol Carelli

- Cards were sent to Melanie Dorrance, Linda Mortensen, Joan Sharpe, Terri McCreadie
- Reminded HS reps to collect the remaining data sheets from members – distributed forms for those who were missing.
- Distributed a thank you from Candace Madej, retired HS Social Worker
- Distributed Executive Board Phone/email list for additional changes

Vice Presidents’ Reports – Kelly Healy, Pete Rings

- No Reports this month

President’s Report – Mary Beth Flatley

- Field Trip Discussion at Woestina – The PTO President attended a faculty meeting to discuss PTO issues, but it got into a discussion about field trips. This discussion was not necessary as the decision to go on a field trip is left up to the individual teacher. Mary Beth spoke with Valerie to remind her of this.
- Mary Beth met with the Woestina teachers and will also be planning to meet with teachers in other buildings for feedback regarding any issue. Building reps were asked to find out when is a good time to meet with the faculty and to get back to her.
- Conferences – Conference attendance requires a Conference Request Form. Some members have been denied attendance at a conference, especially when there is a whole grade or subject level going. According to the contract, there should be a committee to decide procedures and requirements for obtaining conference funds. Mary Beth met with Susan Cook, who was designated by Valerie to oversee the procedures. They will meet again to discuss this issue further. If a grade level or department anticipates attendance at the same conference, let Mary Beth know in advance so she can advocate for members.
- Elementary Supplies – A concern was raised about the quality of the district supplies purchased in bulk. Some teachers did not receive the proper brands hence the poor quality. Notify building principals of this concern. It was suggested that this issue be brought up at the Grade Level meetings in the spring before ordering for next year.
- Jefferson Document Cameras – Mary Beth followed up on an issue with Susan Cook regarding document cameras. Some have been borrowed from the HS and Susan will follow up on the technology schedule to see when more document cameras will be ordered.
- Seniority List – The majority of the issues regarding the seniority list have been resolved. If members still have questions, they should contact Mary Beth to make sure the corrections have been made.

STA Executive Board Meeting, November 2, 2009 (continued)

Negotiations Update - Mike Foley

- October 20, 2009 – Met with the district team to create 2 committees to look at the language regarding the Mentor Program (Susan Cook, Mary Martini) and APPR (Mike Kondratowicz, Joby Gifford, Alisha Couse, Bronson Knaggs). The committees will look at the current documents to make modifications that are needed. Both should report back to the negotiating team by March 31, 2010.
- With the ongoing debate concerning health insurance currently going on at the national level, and the state budget in disarray, the parties have agreed look at the non-monetary issues as we wait to see how the budget resolves.
- Explained the Triborough Act continuation clause and the ramifications for multiple years without a new contract

Tabled Items from October, 2009 meeting

- Shared Decision-Making update – The committee is continuing to meet with the district and John Yagielski. November 9 is the next meeting and they will discuss the presentation to the Board of Education. The STA Executive board will receive a copy of the draft before it goes to the BOE.
- Monthly meetings with administration –
 - Make sure you are sticking to contract issues
 - Good to develop a rapport with the building administrators
 - The meetings lets administration know what is going on in the building
 - Positive working relationship
 - A building rep should take notes and send the minutes to the administrator and Mary Beth as well as copies to the building reps.
 - Remind membership that they should contact a building rep first before contacting Mary Beth if it is a building level issue. Their role is to be accessible to members. All personnel issues should be handled by Mary Beth only.

Building Concerns -Secondary

- HS - had difficulty scheduling a meeting with the principal, but finally met to discuss some employee relations with new members.
- Department Coordinators' meetings – Discussion regarding meeting during the school day as in the past vs. afterschool (this year). Some afterschool meetings were scheduled on a day other than Wednesday. Mary Beth will look into the issue.
- School Improvement Team meetings – These meetings are being scheduled on days other than Wednesday which does not allow the teachers to meet with students after school for extra help. Mary Beth will talk to Terry and Jackie about discussing any other mutually acceptable day or time.
- Weight Room – Expansion in the HS. A committee made up of Chris Muzio, Craig Sargent, Valerie Kelsey, John Gallo, and a member of the Booster Club – There were some concerns from the HS Physical Education teachers that they had no representation on the committee nor were they offered the opportunity to participate on the committee.
- Home Economics Room – The High School Home Ec. room will be turned into a multi-media center. This will allow more 21st century courses to be offered. Any member affected by this issue is supposed to be involved in the process of course offerings.

STA Executive Board Meeting, November 2, 2009 (continued)

Elementary

- Question regarding number of observations of a non-tenured teacher. A probationary teacher in the first year should have 4 observations. In the second year, 3 observations and in the third year should have 2 observations.
- Special Education/AIS Coordinator – There is no coordinator for AIS/Special Ed at the elementary level and there is a need for it to facilitate communication between departments and grade levels. Joanne VanGenderen has agreed to look into it.
- RTI Committee – There have been numerous questions and concerns about RTI as the discussions in buildings and grade levels continue. Teachers may want to get involved so they have their voices and concerns heard as Schalmont's plan for RTI is being developed as it will impact each teacher.
- Elementary Report Card Concerns – There is a concern that the report cards are being done very early in the term to be given out at a conference. Why do the conferences or report cards need to be so early? Will discuss possible solutions/alternatives at December meeting.
- Question about differences in schedules in each building for special areas. Contract defines minimum number of minutes for planning and transition time in the schedule. Inclusion of additional minutes in a schedule beyond this time are at the discretion of the building administration.

Other

- Carol Carelli asked if the STA could sponsor a district-wide food drive to benefit the Schenectady Mission. Motion made to approve the food drive made by Lori Bittner. Seconded by Cori Kinns. Motion passed. Carol will develop a poster to distribute to all buildings and make arrangements with the City Mission for delivery on November 30.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Kim Knapik. Seconded by Kathy Cathell. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

STA Executive Board Meeting, December 1, 2009

Members Present: Mary Beth Flatley, President; Kelly Healy, 1st Vice President; Peter Rings, 2nd Vice President; Carol Carelli, Secretary; Alisha Couse, Treasurer; Chris Bailey, Lori Bittner, Kathy Cathell, Deborah D'Arcangelis, Cori Kinns, Kim Knapik, Joann Lasky, Mike Libertucci, Kevin Meachem, Carol Russell, Carol Walker, Mary Zanta
Members Absent: Bob Anderson, Fred Orlando, Mike Foley

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 P.M.

Motion made to accept the minutes of the November 2, 2009 meeting (with changes) made by Chris Bailey. Seconded by Deborah D'Arcangelis. Motion carried.

Shared Decision-Making Report – Adam Dolan and Lorinda Gandrow, teacher members of the Ad Hoc Committee were invited to report to the Executive Board but could not attend. Mary Beth agreed to present the report.

- Draft of the School –Level Facilitation teams will be presented to the Board of Education at the December 14, 2009 meeting.
- The teachers on the committee have endorsed the document.
- Mary Beth wanted the Executive Board to review the document before it was distributed to BOE members
 - o She dissected the document and explained each section in detail.
 - § Some questions: Will the district goals be determined by the BOE or will there be an opportunity for input? She replied that the BOE is responsible for setting district goals, however building teams may want to work together to accomplish the goal.
- Key Responsibilities
 - o Some changes were made to the document for consideration by the Ad Hoc Committee before presentation to the BOE.
- Major areas of school level operations
 - o Outlined areas in which the teams may be involved.
- Timeline Implementation
 - o Outlined the timeline for the processes for the next year.
- Presentation at December 14, 2009 meeting – Encouraged any members to attend.

Treasurer's Report – Alisha Couse

- Distributed budget as of 12/1/2009.

Secretary's Report – Carol Carelli

- Cards sent to Lynn Gemmitti, Sylvia De LaRosa, Kathy Fagan, Susan Cook.
- Distributed updated Executive Board phone/email list.

Vice-Presidents' Reports

Kelly Healy - Met with a district nurse. Will report next month.

Peter Rings – EBS now has a FLEX Card – distributed information sheet – will need to discuss with Valerie – This may eliminate a lot of paperwork. Executive Board should review the information and discuss at January meeting. The district will have to support this change.

There was a question raised about why the submission of the flex plan has to be in early in December? Answer: District needs to have the forms into the company by January 1. Pete will speak with the district office about date.

STA Executive Board Meeting, December 1, 2009 (continued)

President's Report – Mary Beth Flatley

- Met with the Mariaville teachers – She is available to speak with teachers from any other building. If other buildings are interested in having her meet with their teachers, just let her know when they are available.
- HS Department Coordinators – Coordinators' meetings have previously been held during the school day. Terry Nash now wants to schedule them after school. Mary Beth spoke with Jim Greene, NYSUT LRS. Contract states that "Wednesdays are meeting days". The maximum length is 1 hour. There were two other dates scheduled for coordinators' meetings which have now been changed to Wednesdays.
- HS Weight Room Committee – There was a concern that the HS Physical Education teachers were not consulted when selecting the committee. John Gallo said he chose the middle school PE teacher because he wanted a female perspective. Terry Nash spoke with the HS PE department and Mark Buddle indicated that they will be consulted before equipment purchases are made.
- Elementary Report Card and Conference Schedule – Mary Beth will schedule a meeting with the elementary building reps to discuss the issues and concerns.
- Library Schedule at Elementary Schools – There was a question about the number of minutes and book exchange time at Woestina in relation to the other elementary schools. Shari will change it on the master schedule so that Woestina will be more consistent with the other 2 schools.
- Mileage Reimbursement – Teachers will not be reimbursed for miles from home to a conference. The distance between home and your school will be deducted from the total. Mary Beth checked this with NYSUT and an accountant – it is the law. If you are submitting a travel request, please attach a Google map or MapQuest documenting the distance to expedite your reimbursement.
- An aide in the HS is very sick and may run out of sick days. Mary Beth will find out how many days she needs, in case a request is made for voluntary donation of teachers' sick time.
- Mary Beth met with the Assistant Principal at Jefferson regarding concerns from teachers about website training. Teacher training should go through the STI in the future.
- Holiday parties
 - o Currently \$200 is allowed for the HS and MS and Jefferson, with \$100 to Woestina and Mariaville.
 - o A motion was made to increase the amount by \$50 for 2009. Motion made by Kelly Healy. Seconded by Kathy Cathell. Motion carried.

Building Concerns

- Jefferson- members of the Building Cabinet were told to get babysitters in case the meetings extended to 5:00 P.M. This was a decision made by the administrators and not by the cabinet itself. Mary Beth wants to know if there are concerns from the committee regarding the time.
- The Jefferson Building Cabinet was looking at data with student names on it. There are parents on the committee and this information should be confidential. Joby acknowledged the concern and the names will be removed.
- Reminder – Personal days cannot be used to extend a vacation – see contract language. The only time a reason needs to be shared with an administrator for use of personal time is if the day falls before a holiday and this is done verbally.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Kim Knapik. Seconded by Lori Bittner. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:37 P.M.

Kooky Cartoon



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Co-Editors: Carol Carelli
Kelly Healy

STA Web Site: www.schalmontta.org

President:
1st Vice President:
2nd Vice President:
Secretary:
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STA FAX:
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Mary Beth Flatley
Kelly Healy
Peter Rings
Carol Carelli
Alisha Couse

Mary Beth Flatley
Kelly Healy
Peter Rings
Carol Carelli
Alisha Couse
Lori DeMeo
Joann Lasky
583-8810
339-5673

mflatley@nycap.rr.com
kellyh@nycap.rr.com
prings@nycap.rr.com
ccarelli@nycap.rr.com
alisha@nycap.rr.com

