



SPEAK OUT

ISSUE 5

APRIL/MAY 2008

From the President: Barbara Shapiro



I usually refer to the May issue of *Speak Out* as our election issue because May is the month for BOE

elections (and the school budget) as well as our own PDTA elections. In this issue, you will see the statements of the two candidates running for re-election to the Board of Education. Alka Phatak and Kim McCluski are running unopposed. The development and adoption of the school budget, one of the primary functions of the BOE, has been a difficult task this year. All members of the current BOE felt the pressure to keep the property tax increase in line with other area districts, and approved a budget that contains a number of reductions to program and personnel.

At this point in time, I am hopeful that all PDTA members will have positions next year, but we are very disappointed that students will lose valuable programs and paraprofessional and clerical support. The BOE

PDTA Wants (and Needs) You!

truly feels that the budget balances the program needs of students against the very real concerns of taxpayers. As a union member I am sure you don't need to be reminded that when school budgets are voted down, more reductions and eliminations typically take place. Children will be further hurt, while profession-

year. Still, I worry that we are not involving enough newer and



younger PDTA members. Are new teachers reaping the benefits of a union contract without understanding the decades of struggle that produced it? Are our current leaders in touch with newer members? Are our newer members simply too overwhelmed by the demands of the job and family responsibilities to take a leadership role? I do not have the answer. It is likely some combination of all of these elements. But I know this much—it is absolutely critical that our younger members participate in the functioning of PDTA.

The transition of leadership has already begun. Several longtime union leaders will not be on our RA next year. Over the next few years more of us will be leaving. The PDTA is only as strong as the people who lead it. I am asking each of you to consider taking a more active role in PDTA—perhaps starting out as a committee chair or assistant building rep within your school. How about two hours of your time? There are many contributions you can make with just a two-hour annual contribution. Remember, you are the future of PDTA. We need your enthusiasm, passion and ideas!

Your "YES" vote really does matter.

als and school related professionals—dedicated members just like you—can lose their jobs. Passing the school budget on May 20 will help us move forward. If the budget is rejected, the BOE would have little choice but to further cut into the programs that make Pittsford one of the finest school districts in New York State. It makes no difference in what school district you reside—please join me in supporting the school budget on May 20. Your "YES" vote really does matter.

Our own PDTA elections take place this month as well. In this issue, you will see the slate of District PDTA positions for next year. Building elections will take place later this month. I am pleased that we have several newer members to our Representative Assembly for next

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Know Your Contract: Susan Gager

End of the Year Evaluations

As we approach the end of the year, and work to tie up loose ends, it is important to keep our contractual agreements pertaining to evaluations in mind (Section 8—Professional Staff, and Section 44—SRP).

The intent of the evaluation process is to provide a means to assess job performance, to improve the quality of instruction, to support professional development, to provide opportunities for discussion of interests and concerns, and to provide a written record of feedback and follow-up.

At this time of year, we will likely be engaged in discussions with our supervisors pertaining to **Target Appraisals** and **Summative Evaluations**. According to our contract, non-tenured teachers must receive a target appraisal and summative evaluation, with their building principals, each year. Written forms should be received at or prior to the conference, and conferences should occur by May 1. Tenured teachers must have a target

appraisal with their principal each year, and a summative evaluation every three years. Again, written forms are to be provided at or prior to the conference. These conferences should occur between May 1 and October 15. A common Teacher Target form is used for all professional staff members at all levels. The Summative Evaluation forms mirror our Professional Standards. Most professionals will receive the Summative Evaluation for Teachers. It is important to note that the form is slightly different for some Standards Areas. For instance, psychologists, school nurse teachers, speech language pathologists, librarians and counselors all have different summative forms which are tailored to their unique areas. Principals have updated copies of all summative evaluation forms.

School Related Professionals must receive a written evaluation from their principal or supervisor one time per year. This should occur by June 1. A common district form has been developed for this evaluation. Additionally, each SRP will have an evaluation conference with his/her supervisor no less than once every three years.

All written evaluations are signed by both parties and filed in the employee's evaluation file.

As you wrap up the end of the year, be sure to look for the appropriate evaluations of the important work you do.

About Our Members

Congratulations to Jason and Arlene DeJoy (BRMS), Erin Schmitt (MHS) and Kim Maddelena (CRMS) on the births of their daughters.

Congratulations to Margy Taylor (AC) on her engagement.

We wish a speedy recovery to Valerie Bay (AC) as she recuperates at home, and to Lynda Spiegel (MC) and Sally Eisenberg (MC) as they recuperate from surgery.

We extend our condolences to Deb Champney (BRMS), JoAnn Palma (JR) and RoseMarie Carey on the loss of their fathers, and to Mandy Walsh (PR) on the passing of her father-in-law.

from the person who brought you the weekend...

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BOE Candidates for Re-election *Speak Out*

Kim McCluski

I am currently completing my 12th year on the Pittsford Board of Education; serving three years as president and four years as vice-president. I am seeking reelection because I believe I can continue to make valuable contributions to the important issues facing our district.

During my board tenure, I've held leadership positions at the county, state and federal levels. I believe these experiences have given me a global view of today's educational issues. My accomplishments include guiding the process and hiring our current superintendent, playing a major role in the planning and implementation of the facilities project, working as part of the negotiation teams for several employee contracts, and continuously striving to maintain and improve the strong relationships we have between our stakeholder groups.

We are living in difficult economic times that will necessitate creative ways to approach and solve the challenges we face both now and in the future. In addition to the economic climate, other challenges requiring our attention include state and federal mandates, a more diverse and needy student population and a turnover in senior administrators and staff. I am looking forward to continuing our tradition of working collaboratively to ensure quality education in Pittsford schools.

Alka Phatak

A successful and well organized school district is the cornerstone of a thriving community. Nowhere is this dictum more evident than right here in Pittsford. Three years ago, when the community first elected me to serve on the BOE, I lacked experience but was eager to dedicate the time and effort necessary to serve effectively as a school board member. I believe the lessons learned during this term have prepared me to be an even more productive member of the Pittsford school community as I prepare to enter my second three-year term. My experiences as a board member have included negotiations with the teachers' union last spring as well as being involved with, and currently co-chairing, the MCSBA Legislative committee.

With the building project behind us, we are once again focusing our energy and resources to strengthen our academic curriculum. In spite of the tough budget cuts this year, I believe we have a strong academic program. By adding several new and interesting courses, fine tuning professional development and instituting data-based decision making, we will continue to enhance the performance of our students. I am proud that we are a school district that others benchmark their success against. I look forward to serving the community for another term.

PDTA Representative Assembly for 2008-09

Officers

President — Barbara Shapiro (SHS)

Vice President for Administration — Len Chaput (SHS)

Vice President for Negotiations — Bret Burrows (JR)

Treasurer — Joel Menchel (SHS)

Secretary — Andy Balch (MHS)

Standing Committee Chairs

Communications— Chris Burton (MC)

Health and Safety — Linda Khalil (MC)

Membership — Paul LeVan (SHS)

Political Action — Laura Shemancik (MHS)

Professional Growth — Donna Nichols (MC)

Public Relations — Jill Drake (MC)

Special Events — Caren Glassman (MC)

Delegates

Delegate #1 — Barbara Shapiro (SHS)

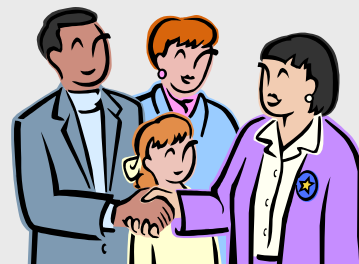
Delegate #2 — Andy Balch (MHS)

Delegate #3 — Len Chaput (SHS)

Delegate #4 — Sue Gager (AC)

Delegate #5 — Joel Menchel (SHS)

Delegate #6 — Karen Shield (SHS)



Health and Safety: Linda Khalil



One Union, Many Voices

Last week, I attended the Annual AFT Health and Safety Training/PSRP conference in Washington, D.C. I brought back valuable safety knowledge to share with PDTA members, but also gained a greater understanding of the valuable contributions of unions such as the AFT, UFT and NYSUT make in creating professional and safe work environments.

The theme of this year's conference was One Union, Many Voices, recognizing that fact that AFT, founded in 1916 to represent the economic, social and professional interests of classroom teachers, has grown to more than 1.4 million members which include: teachers, paraprofessionals and school related personnel (PSRP); local, state and federal employees; higher education faculty and staff; and nurses and other healthcare professionals. In addition, the union includes more than 170,000 retiree members. NYSUT, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the National Education Association (NEA) represent over 1,200 local unions with 600,000 members. Both are affiliated with the international union of the AFL-CIO.

Supporting Safe School Legislation is one facet of the AFT/NYSUT. A safe school environment is a prerequisite for learning. In 2005 there were 176,500 workplace injuries and illnesses reported in New York State, and 4,214,200 reported nationally to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

There are times when colleagues have questioned why we have the requirements for fire safety, completing Global Compliance Modules, or following other safety regulations. These regulations exist in large part due to the work of unions in an effort

to promote safe and healthy work conditions. They are not created as a burden or additional task to be added to the already busy day, but as a responsibility required of all employers to provide their employees with the right to a safe and healthy workplace.

Health and Safety committees help ensure that the school district comply with all of the necessary legal requirements of OSHA and any state laws. These committees also give workers a way to bring their concerns to the attention of administrators.

Despite our best efforts, school environments can pose hazards to school staff. Fortunately, there are ways to prevent or reduce exposure to most of these hazards. AFT and NYSUT offer safety information which can help you to be a part of the solution in making schools safer for both staff and students. Their website has resources to help you educate and protect yourself on the following topics:

Accidents and Injuries, Asbestos, Computers (Ergonomics and Visual Problems), Indoor Air Quality, Infectious Diseases, Preventing Back Injuries, School Security and Emergency Preparedness, Stress, Toxic Chemicals, Worker Rights under OSHA, and Making School Safe.

At the heart of any good health and safety program is good contract language. AFT locals have negotiated:

PROPER STAFFING LEVELS: Adequate staff is essential for a safe school environment.

EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT: Many AFT locals have staff development committees that advise the school board and administrators on what types of staff training should be offered. Local unions also ensure that people who work with students

who have special medical problems or with hazardous materials such as asbestos have access to any training they feel they need.

PROPER TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT: AFT contracts also require the employer to provide proper tools and safety equipment to school employees. Many contracts also require employers to provide Hepatitis B vaccinations for staff.

COMPUTER SAFETY: AFT's Los Angeles community college local negotiated ground-breaking language on computer safety, including requiring the employer to provide proper breaks; free eye examinations and better work stations; proper chairs, desks and lighting.

SURVEYING MEMBERS: Often, AFT locals will survey members to determine the extent of a problem. This information is then shared with the school board and, sometimes, news organizations.

Individuals can only do so much to change conditions. In the end, the union is the best avenue for getting improvements in the workplace. If you want any additional information on safety in the workplace or need help with a work-related problem, please contact your PDTA Health and Safety Rep in your building or me.

Resource information used for this article and further support can also be found at:

AFT
www.aflcio.org

NYSUT
www.nysut.org

PDTA
www.pdta.org



Is the Flexible Spending Option for Me?

Each school year we are given the option of signing up for the Flexible Spending Account for unreimbursed medical expenses (\$2,500 maximum) and dependent care. If you incur medical expenses not covered by your insurance, or you have child care expenses, this plan could be immensely beneficial. Examples of unreimbursed medical expenses would be medical co-pays, dental expenses not covered by insurance, prescriptions, prescription glasses, certain over the counter items, and travel expenses to and from doctor visits.

You are able to save money because the plan uses **pre-tax** dollars deducted from your paycheck each pay period. The amount to be deducted is determined by you based on your expected expenses. This does take some planning because fund balances not claimed each year are lost. Even a modest \$10 contribution per paycheck can offset \$210 worth of expenses while saving you

approximately \$60 in taxes! If you are signing up for the first time, be conservative with your deduction. You can also increase the amount the following May.

Reimbursement Claims

We have 90 days after the end of the school year to make claims on our Flexible Spending Account.

Sign Up

If you haven't yet signed up for Flexible Spending for next year, and you would still like to, call Payroll, x1042 or x1044, by May 16.

The Flexible Spending Account should not be confused with our Health Fund, which is an automatic District contribution and accumulates if not used.



Give a Hand to Save Others From Sudden Cardiac Arrest; Hands-Only CPR Facts.

Sudden cardiac arrest claims hundreds of thousands of lives each year. One of the main reasons is because no one at the scene does anything to help. In fact, less than one-third of sudden cardiac arrest victims receive bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Getting help right away—within a few minutes—is the key to survival. People who have a sudden cardiac arrest and don't get help right away will probably die.

Fortunately, the American Heart Association has a new way for anyone to step in and help adults who suddenly collapse — **Hands-Only CPR**.

- **Hands-Only CPR** is CPR without mouth-to-mouth breaths. It involves two easy steps: Call 911 and push hard and fast on the center of the chest. Don't stop until help arrives.
- *Anyone* can perform **Hands-Only CPR** and *everyone* should perform it if they aren't confident in their CPR skills or haven't learned conventional CPR.
- **Hands-Only CPR** is easy to remember and results in delivery of more, uninterrupted chest compressions until more advanced care arrives on the scene.
- **Hands-Only CPR Online** is a new website dedicated to educating people about **Hands-Only CPR** (www.americanheart.org/handsonlycpr).

- Bystanders must take action when they see someone suddenly collapse and stop breathing normally. When effective bystander CPR is given immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, it can double or triple a victim's chance of survival. **Hands-Only CPR** can help save lives.
- **Do not give Hands-Only CPR to infants and children—all infants and children who have a sudden cardiac arrest need conventional CPR.**
- Adults who nearly-drown or have cardiac arrest due to a respiratory cause need conventional CPR.



MAP keeps you "in the know!"

Did you know:

- You can get assistance in planning for a person with special needs?
- You could save 20 percent on local and one-way truck rentals?
- You can save almost \$60 on a credit monitoring service?

If you joined NYSUT Member Benefits Trust's MAP service, you would know this and a lot more!

MAP, or Member Assistance Program, is a quick, painless, convenient e-mail communications program that provides reminders about the more than 40 endorsed insurance, financial, legal and discount plans available to you as a NYSUT member.

MAP was introduced in the spring of 2007, and to date, more than 3,550 members have signed up for this service. Each week, more members enroll as they hear about the benefits.

MAP e-mails are sent every three weeks. You can open them at your convenience, and you have the option of reading the brief text message or viewing it in html format with colors and graphics.

Messages may be an advance notice of a change in a plan, a new plan, or a reminder. Sometimes you will be asked opinions on programs under consideration for future

endorsement, including which features are most important to you.

Very often, "MAP Alerts" include the opportunity to win prizes donated by providers of endorsed programs or by Member Benefits. MAPers have received such prizes as a Bose Wave® Music System, GPS device, OfficeMax gift cards, and 100 gallons of heating oil.

New MAP enrollees and existing MAPers are automatically entered into quarterly drawings for prizes such as a digital camera, an iPod nano, and a cross-cut shredder.



Member Benefits does not share your e-mail address with outside interests other than endorsed program providers that want to send a message, and then it's only under controlled

circumstances. After receiving approval from Member Benefits to send an offer or information, the vendor is required to destroy the e-mail listing after sending the one communication.

If you haven't yet joined, log on to www.memberbenefits.nysut.org and enroll on our secure page. Within three weeks, you'll start to receive MAP Alerts.



For information about this program or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits Trust at (800) 626-8101, e-mail benefits@nysutmail.org, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed programs.