



December 2015

Vol. XXXX No. 04

# CAPITAL REGION BOCES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

# TRIAD

Affiliated With NYSUT [10-195] & AFT/NEA AFL/CIO-[Local 2991]

## News from the President

Dear Colleagues,

Well, it's December and the holiday season is upon us. This is always a hectic time and the students have more trouble focusing than usual. Still, I have to admit that deep down inside, I love this time of year. Sometimes it takes a while for the magic to grab me, but it always does.

Maybe that's because, even though we have plenty to do in our busy everyday lives, we add to it by taking the time to celebrate with friends and loved ones. It's a lot of work to get ready. There is planning and preparing that goes into the celebrations. There are gifts to buy and wrap. Then maybe a special food or dessert to make. As much fun as it becomes it can add to our already stressful existence, sometimes to the point where you might ask the question "Is it worth it?" I know I've had that thought more than once.

Then things are ready, or at least mostly ready. People come to visit, or we go to visit them. We get to spend time and celebrate with people that we care about. Many of these are close friends or relatives who live far away or simply have lives that are effectively far away from ours. Sometimes we reminisce about the past. Often we catch up on what's happening in our lives. That's when I think "It is really great to see them." or "I wish we could do this more often." It really is a nice time.

This truly is a special time. In reflection and thanksgiving, I would like to thank all our members for being the hard working professionals that they are and

for their continued support. The children we serve are so much better off because of the work you do every day and dedication you have to this work. You are the ones who make education work, regardless of what your specific role is.

I would like to again thank all the members of Rep Council. I want to especially thank all chairs and members of committees, Triad/Website included. You do so much to handle all the important jobs we ask of you. I am always impressed with the way you take on a job and follow it through to its completion. The hard work each and every one of you do is what keeps this Association alive and operational. Your judgment and wise decision-making at our Rep Council meetings keeps us going forward.

I would also like to thank the members of our Executive Board for all of their hard work. These are the folks who often spend many hours a week doing association business. I'm sure it seems that some nights, the phone doesn't stop ringing. The dedication and work they do is immeasurable.

I hope that when you see any of these folks who work so hard for you and your Association, you thank them for the fine job(s) they do. What they do is more than a job, it's a passion. Let them know you really appreciate it.

I wish all of you the very best for the holidays and hope all your wishes come true.

**Looking Forward, Doug**

## CALENDAR

CAPITAL REGION  
BOCES FACULTY  
ASSOCIATION.

### REP COUNCIL

Dec. 16, 2015

### BOCES BOARD

Dec. 17, 2015

### Hanukkah

Dec 7-14, 2015

### Christmas

Dec. 25, 2015

### Kwanzaa

Dec. 26, 2015



**Holiday Greetings**

TRIAD Committee Mtg.  
Jan. 5th, for January  
Newsletter

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# Important Dates for 2015-2016

Exec Board NYSUT	Rep Council 900 bldg. (unless noted otherwise)	TRIAD Meet- ing Maywood	BOCES BOARD Meeting
December 2, 2015	Dec. 16, 2015	Jan. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Dec. 17
January 6, 2016	Jan. 20, 2016	Jan. 26	Jan. 21
February 3, 2016	Feb. 24, 2016	March 1	Feb. 22
March 2, 2016	March 16, 2016	March 22 <sup>nd</sup> or 29 <sup>th</sup>	March 21
April 6, 2016	April 20, 2016	April 26 <sup>th</sup>	April 18
May 4, 2016	May 18, 2016	May 24 <sup>th</sup>	May 16 Schoharie CTE
June 1, 2016	June 15, 2016	None	June 20
	04:15-6:00 PM	4:00 PM	July 18

## Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Leadership

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[www.crbfa.org](http://www.crbfa.org)

# Teaching Assistant/Aide Report

Colleen Condolora, Chapter VP

Dear Constituents,

The holidays are upon us, which means we are all very busy with shopping, decorating and cooking for our family and friends. Please remember to take some time to enjoy the splendor of the season. It is the simple things in life that give us pleasure, such as admiring the creative house decorations, store window displays and the holiday music.

On the professional development front, NYSUT is offering 20 workshops from the Education and Learning Trust this school year. Donna Lampkin sent this information out on my behalf through your BOCES email address. The workshops are all relevant to our positions so please take advantage of these offerings. The cost is \$10 per workshop and you can sign up through the NYSUT Education and Learning Trust website. You must have a My Learning Plan account to register though. I hope those who are required to complete the 75 hours of professional development will take advantage of these available workshops.

The NYSUT reception in November for School Related Professionals was a huge success. Over 150 SRPs from around the capital district attended the recognition dinner. Guest speaker Rocco Montesano, a retired Burnt

Hills-Ballston Lake teacher and president of the Burnt Hills Teacher Association, gave an eloquent and powerful speech on the importance of labor unions and why they are still needed. I wish everyone could have heard him speak, his speech was thought provoking. I hope next year, each of you gives some thought to attending the reception. One of our own, Special Education Teaching Assistant Kevin Rheden, was delightfully surprised to win a \$50 gift certificate. It was a nice evening at the Desmond for all who attended.

I have received a list of this year's Special Projects from a few of our principals. They are very impressive and I will have a challenging time selecting projects to be showcased at this year's TA Recognition in May. I will be making contact with those selected in February. I look forward to our conversation regarding your Special Projects. Thanks for all you do to grow professionally.

I am wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season. Enjoy the festivities with your family and friends and most importantly, please enjoy your short vacation. Each of you deserves the best of everything!

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## FOLKS IN THE NEWS

Enrollment in CTE Cosmetology is sure to increase soon. Channel 13 recently featured a report with students demonstrating skills they are learning. **Pat Gollub**, teacher, gave an overview of the course.

She is still a kid at heart. At the Halloween costume contest, held at the Niskayuna Senior Center, **Anita Riccio** was among the winners. Her costume...LADY GODIVA! Didn't see her

# Do you know your Association's History??? Part II

This will be presented in a few installments. It is important that you understand that everything we have in our contracts was because of those that came before us.

**Pulled together by Jeanette Christoff and friends.**

## THE FIRST CONTRACT SECURED.....

- The right to conduct Association meetings
- The right to negotiate conditions of employment
- Association members would not be censured or receive disciplinary action because of Association membership
- Teachers to be notified prior to evaluations
- Teachers to receive a copy of evaluation within 3 days
- Opportunity to discuss and reply
- The right to review your personnel folder
- Notification of tentative assignment in June for the next year
- Notification of vacancies in writing
- Teacher to receive student data prior to class placement
- Assaults to be reported in writing to principal or supervisor
- Provisions for student safety
- Shall not transport students
- Tenure process
- Right of confrontation
- A grievance procedure
- Sick, personal and death in family days
- Health benefits
- Salary scale

Training is provided to deal with overt behaviors as well as workshops are available to develop behavior plans. You are not responsible for students' nutrition, dispensing medications, first aid, fire drills or transporting them in your car. Class hours and bus schedules have been fine-tuned. How many times have you waited alone with a student for two hours until their bus arrived? Do you get a lunch break or are you expected to be in your classroom from arrival to departure time, even if it is 7 PM?

Additionally, you are not subjected to unannounced evaluations. You have sick days if needed and a sick leave bank is available. There is a Grievance process if the contract has been breached.

These are only a few of the items covered in the 92 page Teachers' Contract. How fortunate for all to have strong leadership on your Executive Board, who can be counted on to follow through on all contracts of every Chapter. They need your support, your presence, your active participation to maintain all that has been gained. How unhappy everyone would be with a return to the days of,

## WILL OUR STORY CONTINUE????

The original contract, which secured these benefits, consisted of 12 pages. Over the past 40 years it has grown to 92 pages. Our founders built a foundation that has endured. It has positively affected the lives of 100's who have come and gone during these four decades. Nearly the entire content of the first contract is included in the current contract and affects the work you do each day in ways you may not even be aware of.

You have the opportunity to review new students' folders and have input on the placement that will best meet their needs. There is a process available when a placement is inappropriate.

# Retirees Corner

By Jeanette Christoff—518-356-0137

Dear Faithful Readers,

The earth continues to turn; evening comes and morning follows. How miraculous to know that dawn will come again and dispel the darkness of the woods when, even the familiar seems to vanish. How beautiful the morning sun on golden leaves against dark and ominous clouds. It is much like life with its golden moments of joy and celebration and its dark moments of tragedy and sorrow.

What a gift these warm, sunny days of our extended summer! Returning to Eastern Standard Time brings darkness too soon. For those who must travel great distances, life must seem like perpetual night as they depart in the dark and return in the dark. Fortunately the holiday lights can brighten their way and add some cheer as they eagerly anticipate the comfort of home.

As time continues, so also do the historic events of the present. Once again we find ourselves concerned about terrorists' attacks in our own country. As the memories of 9/11 diminished, our fears of an imminent attack gradually disappeared. The terrorism in Paris and San Bernadino reminds us that it can happen again and very likely will. We must adjust our minds to that possibility and then go on with life. Worry is useless and we can do nothing to stop them. As awesome as the Internet is, it has also facilitate planning for those who would destroy us. So we must do our best to let go of negative thought and immerse ourselves in the upcoming holidays with their religious significance for those who believe, with the happiness of seeing family and friends, with the sweet taste of once-a-year delicacies and the wonderful anticipation of opening a brightly wrapped gift with our name on it.

Best wishes and good health to all.

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## REP COUNCIL NOTES

Nov. 18th meeting —by Susan Kusalonis

### Chapter VP Reports

#### TA-Aide – Colleen

- Spoke about the SRP Recognition Dinner held at the Desmond on Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>. Speaker, Roco Montisano, BH-BL Teacher spoke very well regarding the history of unions.
- Special Ed – E Newsletter to Related Service (RS) staff and Teachers went out regarding professional Development.
- TA Sub Committed for staff development will start by end of Month.
- Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> there will be a new member workshop at NYSUT from 4-7 PM including Dinner
- Feb. 27-28 there will be a SRP Conf. at the Otasaga in Cooperstown. If interested go to the link on NYSUT's website.

#### Service – Sandy – No Report

#### Spec. Ed. Teacher – Flora

- Flora has met with Peter regarding ongoing issues. A meeting is coming up soon with Peter and

Lynn Wells regarding issues on stand-alone buildings and staff matters.

- Suggestion was made to add discussion of treatment space for providers at Mohonasen and Maywood .

Q – Can you describe issues?

A – Related Service – Medicaid; use of a janitor shared between buildings; working conditions in stand-alone buildings are some of the items to be discussed.

### New Business

Motion to adopt a family for the Holidays. Sandy Smith asked for \$500 from savings to fund this and have the Albany Family Services supply us with a family due to the short time frame. Motion Passed

It was recommended that she write a second motion and bring to next month's meeting to proceed with this as a yearly process and start a committee that will design the guidelines for future years so that a family from BOCES Staff would have the ability to apply to be the family.

#### CTE Teacher – No Report

# BOCES Board Meeting Notes

During the privilege of the Floor, Kevin from Schoharie stated that he had attended the "Culinary Cornucopia" the previous day and that Paul Dolan's class took the only Gold Metal given out that night.

Board President read a letter the Board had drafted to the Communication Team commending them on the 34 awards that the NYS School Public Relations has awarded them for their superior work for the school districts publications.

District Superintendent – Dr. Chuck Dedrick

**Customer Service Goal** – We are making inroads in organizing staff and getting people on the same page!! One thing that had come to light was that the different ideas on how to present customer service, varied from one office to the next. They are working on the next step, which was to present to instructional staff.

Deb Bush-Sulfida stated that they had been working with non-instructional staff. So far they had done 350 in 10 sessions. They have 70 staff scheduled for next week. There will be one make up session for staff who missed any of the sessions.

- They Survey Monkey and sent out after each session and so far the response has been 55% of those that attended. Of those, 97 % agree with the process.
- One questions asked on the survey, was do you plan to model in your day to day work and 97%, agreed they would.
- What did you like about the training? Getting together with people we don't normally have a chance to meet.

Questions by Board Members:

- Want to know if this will have any teeth?
- Will people be held to this goal?
- How do we check on this one year from now?

Dr. Dedrick stated that the Consultant is going to do spot checks on this. Deb Bush also said that we may do focus groups to get some feed-back from our Customers.

Q. Do we have any way to have a real person answer all calls that come in?

A. Long term fix will be needed.

Q. How will staff be recognized for "Job Well Done" or going above and beyond?

A. Not sure about positive, but he is sure we will hear negative first. People are more motivated to let us know if they are unhappy.

**Professional Development Plan Report** – Lynn Wells and Donna Lamkin presented

How do we meet everyone's needs – We are not there yet.

- BOCES PDP Structure chart shows how the staff involved in the committee will be handling the goals of the organization. (Sub-Committee vs main committee)
  - NERIC – new position – Internal Staff Development
  - Special Ed – lots of new technology in the division and staff are enthusiastic about this
  - Special Ed - New Staff Development Committee
- Q – How do we support staff in districts? What organization do the TA's have to support them? How do we let them know about these options?
- A – NYSUT and CASDA for training and we are trying to focus on time they have for the training

November 17<sup>th</sup> - School Related Professional Day – Dr. Dedrick read the paragraph that had recently been sent out in the Insider on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>. If you know someone in your school, please say thanks.

- Tuesday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> Dr. Dedrick will be at SUNY for the College to Career Pipeline meeting. He will be interested to see and hear how they are doing as they are similar to our group.
- Wednesday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> Dr. Dedrick and Lynn Wells will be at the Capital for a meeting.
- Dr. Dedrick commented that over the past 5 years the Big Five and BOCES have become more involved in conversations. This is a 170% turnaround from where we started. We meet regularly.

Committee Reports:

Internet Ethics – two new polices dealing with this on the portal for board members to review.

November 23<sup>rd</sup> – A group will be available to help people use the new SED portal and answer questions on the core standards. We need more educators to fill out the survey. We believe if being filled out by educators, they are listing themselves as a parent first. It is important to support the CTE Salary aid-ability ceiling being raised.

Meeting ended at 7:30 PM

# Social Media Tips: Twitter!

By Erica Kane, Co-Editor, TRIAD

What is Twitter? It is a social media platform that enables users to broadcast and read short 140-character messages called Tweets. The platform was created and launched in 2006 and now boasts of 302 million active users.

Not only can Twitter can be fun, it is surprisingly easy, and it is a great platform to connect with others. In order to gain full access to all of Twitter's capabilities, you must sign up; you can access Twitter on any browser using Twitter.com or it can be accessed on the Twitter mobile app on a smartphone.

Signing up is easy; go to <http://twitter.com> and find the sign up box in the top right corner of the page or go directly to <https://twitter.com/signup> and follow the directions to create your account.

Before you begin to Tweet, it is important to understand Twitter's privacy settings in the form of public and private/protected Tweets. When you sign up for Twitter, you have the option to keep Tweets public or private/protected.

If you make an account with private/protected Tweets it will require you to manually approve each and every person (follower) who may view your Tweets. Why would users protect their Tweets? Well, some people only want to share information with a select audience, like family. You can always change your mind and make Tweets public later.

If you make an account with public Tweets, *everyone* will be able to see your Tweets

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## Some Thoughts on the NYSED Common Core Standards Survey

By John Fitzpatrick, Teacher and member of Communications Committee

I am a rather opinionated guy, so I enjoy when I'm asked what I think about almost any topic. I appreciate an open and honest dialogue with participants who can passionately, but impersonally, argue for their respective positions. That is not only stimulating, but can be very influential, even to someone who has been forming opinions for as long as I have! But occasionally, what initially seemed to be an interesting offer to engage in what might have been a useful exchange of philosophies, perspectives or speculations turns out to be a disappointing waste of time because discussion of the real issues are forbidden, rendered unspeakable, relegated to the "elephant in the room" status. That's when I know that the scope of what can no longer even be called a conversation has been so limited that basically, the fix is in.

When I heard back in the summer that NYSED was going to be reaching out to "stakeholders" for their feedback on issues with the Common Core in New York State, I was optimistic, naively, it seems. New Yorkers have been invited to complete a very thoroughly exhaustive survey on the Standards. What

we like and don't like about each and every Standard, ad infinitum, ad nauseam.

But clearly, the overwhelming evidence from the public is not a dislike for the Standards, but for the assessments NYSED has decided to crush the "stakeholders" with arbitrarily and even cruelly. About 20% of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in New York State refused to take the math and English test last April, instead choosing to "opt out". Unfortunately, high school students cannot exercise this act of civil disobedience since passing their Regents exams is required for graduation. Two of these exams, Algebra and English, are fully revised, supposedly in accordance with the Common Core Standards, but the reasonable Standards have somehow been turned into Regents exams that many see as unreasonably complex and difficult. So the connection of the assessments to the Standards seems tenuous.

The promise to incorporate the public's feedback in terms of modifying the Standards in no way reassures me that there will be any shift in the testing phi-

The TRIAD is published monthly for the Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Membership. We appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have.

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## Sample Letter of Intent to Retire—Due to HR by 1/15/16

Your home address  
City, New York Zip

Date

Mr. Robert Zordan, Director of Human Resources  
Management Services Capital Region BOCES 900  
Watervliet-Shaker Road  
Albany, New York 12205

Dear Mr. Zordan:

Please accept this letter as written notice, as required, of my potential decision to retire from my position during the 2016-17 School Year in order to receive compensation for unused sick leave.

Should I decide to retire during this time period I will notify (name of appropriate Division Director), Director of the (?) Division.

Please feel free to contact me if any additional information is needed.  
Very truly yours,

### Sunshine Chairperson

If you know of someone who could use a little cheering up, our sympathy, or a get well card, please contact:  
Abby Fischer, [abby.fischer5@gmail.com](mailto:abby.fischer5@gmail.com)

#### Disclaimer for Articles in the TRIAD

The articles contained in the TRIAD are proofed by the Communication Committee and the individual's opinion and do not reflect the opinion of the Executive Board of Rep Council or the Communication Committee of the Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association. They are strictly for your information and enjoyment.