



March 2016

Vol. XXXX No. 07

# CAPITAL REGION BOCES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

# TRIAD

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

## News from the President

Dear Colleagues,

We're getting there. Better than half way through the third quarter with one quarter to go. For those of you who work in education year round, summer's coming. It's really starting to feel like spring and I like the warmth of the sun as it shines through the windows. As the sun continues to start earlier, end later and go higher in the sky I feel a sense of optimism in what the future will hold. Yes, I know that like the sun, we have started earlier, ended later and worked harder to raise student performance higher. If we had the funding needed we might have made a huge difference. And if we were not hamstrung with an onerous and destructive APPR process we definitely would have been able to continue on the positive path we had been on.

Unfortunately that was not the case. I believe it will take many years of adequate funding and continued hard work on the part of staff to get us back up to where we were. The damage done by our governor and his cronies will take years to repair. What is so unfortunate about that is that our students have suffered along with very competent teaching staff, so much that, the trend now is to get out of teaching as soon as it is possible (or in some cases despite the personal cost). I have seen many excellent teachers beaten back, not supported when they should have been and at a point where if they were not such dedicated professionals, would have given up. Much of that is a result of the actions by the governor, the board of regents, and the legislature, either directly or indirectly.

So why am I optimistic? Well it isn't because I believe public education in New York is as low as it possibly can be (though it really has dropped). It is because we have a commissioner who now actually tries to talk with educators and continually solicits input in how we can make it better. I know you think that is not a novel idea, yet for several years under Commissioner (charter school) King that was not

the case. It seemed the only input he wanted was from the governor's office and his cronies. With a governor who was not listening to what his constituents needed there was a huge problem, and failure was truly the only potential outcome.

So is that why I am optimistic? That is part of it. Another reason for my renewed optimism is that we have three new regents who have a background in advocating and supporting education, one of whom is a thirty year veteran teacher. That veteran has been in the classroom and should know of the challenges teachers and education as a whole face. Where else are you going to find answers the problems that need addressing if you don't start in the classroom with the folks who are dealing with them on a daily basis? It makes sense to me.

The third reason I am optimistic is that the state has a large revenue surplus this year. Does that mean that this years' budget will be amended to adequately fund education. I hope so. Without the financial ability to provide adequate support to the students in our schools and their teachers we can have the best program laid out but will be unable to implement it. This year, with the large budget surplus, there is no valid excuse for not providing the financial resources schools need. After years of cutting school funding, it is time the governor and the legislature put the education of our children first and fund it properly.

Your state union, NYSUT, has worked hard to help bring about these changes and will continue to work hard for you. You need to do your part. Go on the NYSUT MAC and participate in informing your legislatures of the topics listed which you support. In addition, if you can give anything to VOTE/COPE do so. The VOTE/COPE fund is the source to pay for the lobbying and political action NYSUT does to bring about positive change. I know that it may only be a few dollars, but give what you can.

**Looking Forward, Doug**

### CALENDAR

CAPITAL REGION  
BOCES FACULTY  
ASSOCIATION.

#### REP COUNCIL

March 16, 2016

#### BOCES BOARD

March 21, 2016

#### Purim

March 24th

Happy Purim



#### Good Friday & Easter

March 25 & 27



TRIAD Committee Mtg.  
March 22nd, for April  
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
March 2, 2016	March 16, 2016	March 22 <sup>nd</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 <b>Schenectady Room</b>	None	June 20
	04:15-6:00 PM	4:00 PM	July 18

**CELEBRATION BASH**  
June 2, 2016—Mohawk River Country  
Club  
“Save the Date”

**BOCES Spring Prom**  
May 20, 2016—Quality Inn, Albany  
“Save the Date”

**Student Incentive Award  
Deadline—May 1, 2016**  
“[www.crbfa.org](http://www.crbfa.org)”

## 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:

Spring has finally arrived and with the change of season comes a beautiful rebirth and fresh awakening. The smells in the air, the birds chirping and flowers pushing hard to come above ground is a very welcoming sight. Easter and Passover are early this year but since we had such an easy winter the weather should be nice for everyone to enjoy their long weekend.

Congratulations to **Jason Berkowitz, Karen Brayton, Cynthia Devendorf, Cindy Foss, Chuck Fuller, Kerry-Ann O'Brien, Cynthia Packard, Mary Beth Ragucci, Kevin Rheden, James Ruth and Alex Stern**, for being selected as candidates for the Teaching Assistant/Aide Show-Case this year. Everyone should have received their invitation through the courier this month. Please come out and support your co-workers on May 12<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 4:30 PM at Central Administration. The ShowCase Recognition is a beautiful afternoon celebrating Teaching Assistants and Aides and all their accomplishments and contributions in the educational field. I am always so proud when administrators, co-workers, friends and family get to see first-hand how important School Related Professionals are to their respective classrooms. Great work everyone!

I wish to extend my thoughts and prayers to Special Education, Teaching Assistant **Carol Clark**. Within a few short weeks, Carols' father-

in-law and father passed away. If you see Carol, please give her a much needed hug or a shoulder to lean on. These are trying times for her. Thanks!

If anyone is having challenges with the aggressiveness of students, please let me know. It is my understanding that injuries are on the rise and I need to know if you are being affected negatively both physically and mentally. The population of students we are currently servicing now have more mental health issues at a younger age. Districts throughout the area have voiced their concerns. The only way we can assist you is if we know from you what is happening. Everything you say to me is always kept in the strictest confidentiality.

For those staff who want to work summer school, you should have received an email from Dr. Peter Taormina to sign up. Everything is being done electronically, you will receive a confirmation your submission has been accepted. I still can't believe we are talking about summer school, where the heck is time going. The older I get the faster it is moving.

Enjoy your few days off and the beautiful weather. As always, if you have any concerns, please call or send me an email. I always look forward to hearing from you.

**In Solidarity,**

**Colleen Condolora, Chapter Vice President,  
Teaching Assistant/Aide**

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## NYSUT Capital District Regional Office Calendar

March 18-19, 2016, 8:00 p.m.

**ED 11, 12 & 45 Meeting (All Welcome)**

Oneonta Holiday Inn

Contact: Maria Pacheco, stepstudents.maria@gmail.com

March 21, 2016, 6:00 p.m.

**ED #10 Meeting (All Welcome)**

Saratoga Hilton

Contact: Tony McCann, amccanned10@yahoo.com

March 29, 2016, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

**TRS Retirement Workshop**

Queensbury Union Free School District – High School

Contact: Tammy Boire tboireot@gmail.com

March 30, 2016

**HFM Regional Presidents Meeting**

Contact: Richard Peters rpeters5@nycap.rr.com

April 12, 2016, 4:15 p.m.

**Suburban Council Negotiators**

NYSUT HQ CDRO Conference Room

Contact: David Rounds, bctaunited@gmail.com

April 14, 2016, Thursday, 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

***School-Related Professional Communication: Skills for Effective Speaking & Listening***

*NYSUT HQ*

*Register at <http://tinyurl.com/ovvtzgk>*

April 19, 2016, Tuesday, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**APPR Encore**

Greenwich H.S. Library

RSVP to Doreen Burgett at dburgett@nysutmail.org

\*Items marked in **Red / Italics** are offerings from the newly launched CDRO Learning Academy

# Retirees Corner

By Jeanette Christoff

Spring Greetings,

As our planet approaches the vernal equinox, the astronomical beginning of Spring, we can be grateful for coming through an easy winter. What a contrast to last year's January, February and March with their bitter cold and several back to back snow storms. We gained confidence in NOAA, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. A saved news article (Gazette, 10/16/2015), gave a prediction for the winter of 2015-16. According to the article, California would finally receive rain in January. They did. Our great Northeast would be warmer than last year with 6% fewer heating degree-days. Our own utility bills for the past three months totaled \$152 less than last year's. The Great Lakes area would receive less precipitation this year and we certainly recall what Buffalo went through last year with collapsing roofs and nowhere to put the snow. El Nino is credited or blamed for the weather of this winter.

Although winter still has a month to go at this writing, and can hang on well into spring, with an occasional snow storm in April and even May, (in the 70's,) it is a pleasure to have dry roads, to have an untouched snow thrower and for staff, students and parents to be free of the confusion of school

delays, closings and the potential for fender benders on slippery road way.

We are approaching the due date for the IRS and state taxes and again must be aware of bogus IRS callers making accusations of owing back taxes. One of our retired widows received such a call that was very unnerving. She was threatened with police arrest if she hung up, but decided some company would be nice, so she hung up. The police never arrived so she called them and was informed of this nation wide scam. One victim lost \$500,000.

According to Thomas Cumas Treasury Dept. deputy inspector general "the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by phone. Real IRS agents usually contact people first by mail and they never demand payment by debit card, credit card or wire transfer" (Gazette 3/15/2015).

Feb. 26, first flock of robins!

## PERSONALS

Our condolences to our editor, **Susan** and **Jim** on the passing of "Momma", their Great Pyrenees. She was a beautiful and regal lady.

## Social Media Tips: Twitter!

E. Kane

Now that you have created your Twitter account it is time to Tweet and hashtag. But what is a Tweet and what is a hashtag?

In the Twitter Help Center, they define Tweet as a Twitter update that "may contain photos, videos, links and up to 140 characters of text." Once a user creates a Tweet and clicks the Tweet button, the post will appear on the user's timeline and will be visible to his/her followers, depending on privacy settings.

According to Twitter, "The # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages." When a Twitter user hashtags there must be no space between the # symbol and the word(s) or phrase(s). When a hashtag is posted, it creates a clickable link to search for the same hashtag in the Twitter database. Hashtags are powerful in that they foster solidarity amongst Twitter users that may hold similar sentiments to a simple idea or greater ideology (#SuperTuesday and #MyMotherAlwaysSaid are popular hashtags this month).

Upcoming issues will provide tips related to Twitter as an educational tool!

# Vicarious Traumatization and the Wisdom of my Colleagues

John Fitzpatrick, Special Education Teacher

The term “trauma” is being used more and more recently in trying to establish a rationale or perspective from which to understand the challenging and confusing behavior of many of our students. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf> defines trauma as “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”, but also stipulates that “A particular event may be experienced as traumatic for one individual and not for another.” So it’s easy to fall into the trap of assuming that anyone can “get over it” if some can. SAMHSA also states that “The long-lasting adverse effects of the event are a critical component of trauma. These adverse effects may occur immediately or may have a delayed onset. The duration of the effects can be short to long term. In some situations, the individual may not recognize the connection between the traumatic events and the effects. Examples of adverse effects include an inability to cope with the normal stresses of daily living; to trust and benefit from relationships; to manage cognitive processes, such as memory, attention, thinking; to regulate behavior; or to control the expression of emotions.”

This, we all know. We hope and pray that our students are able to develop resiliency and heal to the point of functionality with our constant, committed attention and support, in the context of whatever level of connection and relationship they are able to progressively tolerate. We offer ourselves completely, physically and psychologically, for their use and, often, abuse.

This means that everything I wrote above applies now to us as well. There are many studies on teacher retention issues, burnout and compassion fatigue, and one thing I noticed that many have in common is the recommendation that we have to take care of each other. Professional development helps, rational administrators who “get it” help, but colleagues looking out for each other and nurturing relationships with each other in the same way we try to and hope to with our students is what has the most potential in my opinion for healing our vicarious, and in many cases actual, traumatization. That has certainly proven true for me over the course of the last 29 years with BOCES.

I am so, so grateful to these many colleagues who have continuously enabled me to heal and renew and return to the state where I could be fully available to my students. Some of them mentored me early on, some gave me the approval I needed to develop a feeling of competence, some gave very important, if not always immediately appreciated, constructive criticism. Some just shared their stories, offering such a tender vulnerability that I was invited to do the same. I have valued these encounters more than I can ever say and know that being similarly available to my colleagues is the only way I can show my gratitude.

I observe many of my coworkers doing for each other daily just what I have described. But I also remember that at various times when I needed help or guidance or a paradigm shift, I was the last to know. Someone had to take a deep breath and approach and hope for the best.

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## Students put their government skills to the test with state lawmakers

New Visions students join BOCES leaders to advocate for changes

For the last six months, students in the Capital Region BOCES New Visions: Law and Government program have been learning how the inner workings of the government and judicial system work.

On Wednesday, March 2 they took an active role in the government, joining forces with BOCES leadership from around the state as they advocated for legislation that would improve the education system and BOCES.

Armed with smiles, stiff handshakes and a folder filled with information, two delegations of Capital Region BOCES students, faculty and staff took to the hallowed halls of the state Capitol and Legislative Office Building as their peers from other BOCES around the state did the same.

The students were able to personally lobby state Sen. Neil Breslin and Assemblyman Phil Steck, as well as meet with the aides and interns of other state lawmakers.

# Capital Region BOCES Board Notes—February 22, 2016

By Susan Kusalonis

Meeting opened with Budget reports.

## Special Education Budget – Dr. Peter Taromina

Some details are:

2015-16 students 525; 2016-17 students 530 estimated  
Salaries – 55.41%; Benefits 30.40% = 85.51% of budget

### Challenges for 2016-17

Education of students with intense behaviors, mental health diagnoses and dual diagnoses

Enhancement of existing data management systems

Expansion of outcome based and focused PD opportunities for teaching and RS staff through agency and divisional collaboration and planning

Expansion of Center-based programming for students who cannot function in the regular public school environment

Q – How is the professional development for staff?

A – Robust PD environment now.

### Initiatives for 2016-17

Regional implementation of WBL through DOS grant

Continue work in Tandem with ESS to implement literacy and math training Surrounding

CCLS

Consistently utilize data to inform instruction and student behavior

Utilize SEL, QIP (Quality Improvement Process) and STRONG models as way to increase student success as well as staff self-awareness and coping skills

Expand Handle With Care training for de-escalation and crisis intervention (TA's are trained first)

Create and implement new internal methods for monitoring and improving related service and IEP delivery

Q – Why only one student from Shenendehowa SD?

A – Wealthy home districts that can take care of their own students will.

Q – How is morale holding up?

A – Initial response to changes with new principals had their challenges but both established in a positive way. The morale of staff is good. Both Lynn Wells and I are meeting with special education officers and Doug to review how staff are doing.

Dr. Dedrick – DS Staff discuss mental health issues for staff – it is very important to DS's.

Q – How far away is help for the teacher if a large student acts out?

A – Maywood School help is only a walkie talkie away.

Q – What do we do about students that are not appropriate for BOCES?

A – We do not accept students that we do not have placement for. We are working very closely with Berkshire Farm and Oakwood – residential schools are very full. Still have a line of students waiting.

## NERIC Budget – Dale Breault

Some details are:

- Costs to districts are 1.96% (under 2% increase)
- Budget has increased 3.52% over last year
- Staffing costs for salaries and benefits 43.34%

### Strategic BOCES-Wide Goals

Plan and implement training and initiatives to improve customer service at all levels of the organization and strengthen relationships with school districts and business/community partners.

Enhance BOCES' effectiveness and efficiencies through interdivisional cooperation, collaboration and innovation.

### Concerns

Ready market saturation

After effect of district being conservative

Smart Schools Bond Act – money there, but holding on to funds

Districts need to keep aid flowing, don't hold back on spending.

### Positive Directions:

- Distance Learning has added LHRIC (Lower Hudson RIC) to services. Over 200 classes being transmitted through NERIC daily.
- Model Schools – FEH BOCES has asked for our support with this and as of today we have a new Manager working in the North Country to coordinate their staff and service.
- With Greg and Wendy's help we are writing a Coser to help districts with Smart School purchase.
- Pursuing Vendors – RIC only pricing. May get three years of additional warranty, chrome book – three year breakage coverage.

Q – Slide 3 – are you breaking down cost to cover service so districts are aware of costs?

A – If an ongoing service, we inform district of these costs.

Q – Slide 6 – Staffing Costs – seems high?

A – Actually lower cost percentage.

**Comment** – Glad that Dale had educated the Commissioner of Education to the fact that NERIC had been asked to help out and were not being paid for services requested of us.

Dr. Dedrick introduced Lynn Wells and Valerie Kelsey so they could present information on Sterile Process Services that is being started at CTE. This stems from concern about chemicals being used.

After a brief video on how the process would look, Valerie stated that they would be no dangerous chemicals. Similar to dish liquid. The course will take two years for a HS student and one for an adult.

Dr. Dedrick also commended CTE on acquiring Lowes Grant of \$10,000 (through Social Media) for Jacks Place in Schenectady.



NERIC update on last month's shut down. Of the three pieces of hardware that failed, two have been removed from the process. Districts were very complementary about how quickly we came back up.

Q – Any liability incurred?

A – No language re down time insurance for data loss and theft.

Comment: Maybe we should consider it.

Q – How many staff have taken FEMA courses that are available?

A – Twenty people so far – key people in key spots.

Announcement: The March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting will be at dual locations. Plattsburgh and here in Albany. Please let Dr. Dedrick know if you want to be at the Plattsburgh location and he will have arrangements made.

Q – Personnel Items. Did we budget for the Assistant Director of ESS and Management Services?

A – Yes, this position was anticipated.

The 2016-17 Regional Calendar was approved.

The Board entered Executive Session and I left the meeting ended at 7:15 PM.

## Representative Council Meeting NOTES February 24, 2016 by Susan Kusalonis

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

### Chapter Vice Presidents Reports

#### Special Education – Flora

- Kris, Doug and I have met with Peter regarding behavior in classroom –need to develop consistency with incident reporting. Trauma informed intervention.
- Tougher kids are coming from districts – Much discussion.
- Q – Are we going to be the next contained classroom (day-treatment)?
- QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) “in school suspensions” count as out of school
- Come up with a way to have in school suspension that could take with a teacher being present as an “Alternative Learning Environment”.

#### TA/Aide – Colleen

- Concerns regarding injuries in TA Chapter. Handle with Care has problems. Conversation with Peter re RAI and II not safe. No padding in time out room. More consistent Handle with Care training at RA I.
- Q – Are the incident reports recorded and data collected? Is someone checking on this and reviewing problems?
- A – Risk Management reviews these reports.
- Q – Is anyone following up with staff for Worker Comp??
- Q - Is the Board aware that Benetch is hurting staff??

- There are issues in Maywood School classrooms. Two TA's terminated last week – serious professional boundaries raised. (Untenured).
- No orientation when staff are hired.
- TA Survey for Special Education only was sent out regarding professional development.
- Tuition reimbursement has been increased to \$200 per TA with a total for year of \$2,000 for all TA's. Workshop training is not included.

#### BOCES Board Report – Susan

Brief notes were reviewed with the group. There was some discussion regarding staff development and morale in the divisions. This was in reference to the Special Education Division Budget report that was part of the notes.

A thank you was extended to Susan for attending the monthly board meetings.

#### BUDGET Report

Call for members needed: TA – Kevin Rheden, Service – Susan Kusalonis, Teacher – Richard Lupi and Anne Conway, CTE Teacher – Erica Kane

Meeting to be held soon.

#### **New Business**

Lobby Day March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Motion to increase refreshment line item in Budget by \$1,000 to be taken from savings account. Passed

#### Negotiations – Lisa

Not ready at this time.

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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## March checklist

**Keep kidneys healthy:** March is National Kidney Month. Minimize use of ibuprofen and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. They can cause damage if taken regularly over a prolonged period. Other risk factors: Diabetes...high blood pressure...high triglyceride levels...low levels of HDL (“good” cholesterol)...long-term sleep problems (disrupted or insufficient sleep.)

**Save computer files:** Thursday, March 31, is World Backup Day. Copies of important files should be stored in two places—in your home or office and in another location, such as Dropbox or other cloud storage service.

**Extra savings for going green:** State-by-state guide to rebates, tax credits and other incentives for installing energy-efficient windows, doors, refrigerators, washing machines, etc. [DsireUSA.org](http://DsireUSA.org)

### 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 518-221-1237,

[abby.fischer5@gmail.com](mailto:abby.fischer5@gmail.com)

### Disclaimer for Articles in the TRIAD

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