Colleagues:
At 11:00 pm last night, your profession in NYS was changed. By a vote of 92-54 our legislature approved the following changes (among others) that will immediately impact your district, your school, your students, your families, your colleagues and you.

We will take the liberty to assume that by the time you are through reading what follows you will be angry, hurt, and demoralized. Questions will race through your mind and because you do not have the answers you will become anxious and fearful. We are not writing to make you feel better...we are writing to say you should be afraid – your profession – your livelihood – your children’s education - is at stake.

The only way to alleviate the fear is to get hold of your profession through action.

However, we have a problem in the WCT – apathy. It is a strong word, but one that is necessary. As members of your executive board, we accept our part in allowing you to be apathetic – the WCT executive board, the senior/junior building reps and negotiating team have worked long and hard on various issues that have arisen to preserve and protect your rights and as a result have made it appear easy to you, as its members. The easy is over. We have a common cause; it is a fight - that bands us all together that cannot be done with small pockets of people – to save our profession.

We need every member –those just through the door and those on the way out of the door – to be an active member – now, not later. Did you know that those in charge of the new Teacher Evaluation System will be the unelected Board of Regents and the interim Commissioner of Education?

We need you to immediately communicate - to a building rep or executive board member your willingness - to be an active member. Do not be idle. Call, e-mail or text, now, your willingness to be added to a “call to action” list and to respond when needed. Yes, now. You are worth the time.

We need you to immediately ask a colleague if they have signed up for the WCT website – it is our best vehicle for communication – and if they have not - at that “judgment-free” moment - help him or her sign up.

We need you.

In Solidarity,
Wappingers Congress of Teachers
Executive Board
• **New to the Teacher Evaluation System**
  o One mandatory state test and one optional test
  o State will develop growth scores based on the exams that measure how much students improve from one year to the next
  o Teachers without a state exam will be evaluated on “student learning objectives”
  o Independent Evaluator – can be an administrator from another school in our district or another district
  o Optional Peer Observation – performed by a peer from another school in our district or outside the district as long as the peer has been rated “effective” or “highly effective
  o If a teacher earns an “ineffective” based on a required state test, the teacher may not earn “effective” or “highly effective” overall
  o Districts may no longer consider the following in determining educators’ evaluations: lesson plans, student portfolios (with some exceptions) and student/parent feedback/surveys
  o Districts must negotiate optional components with locals by November 15th or they lose state aid
  o Students may not be instructed by two “ineffective” teachers in consecutive years

• **New to Teacher Tenure**
  o Probationary period of 4 years rather than 3 years
  o Must earn “effective” or “highly effective” for 3 of 4 years
  o Teachers who already received tenure in another district will serve a three-year probationary period in new district
  o Teacher who held successful substitute teaching positions for 2 years in a district will serve a two-year probationary period
  o Educators can be fired at any time during the probationary period

• **Teacher Certification**
  o Teachers with lifetime certification must register with the state every 5 years
  o Applicants for registration must complete 100 hours of continuing education or professional development every 5 years. “The department” will determine what course work shall qualify.
  o Teachers who perform observations for the purpose of the state’s teacher evaluation system may count those hours towards the total.

• **Teacher Discipline**
  o Teachers who earn 2 consecutive “ineffective” ratings may be brought up on charges of incompetence by their schools boards and a decision will be made within 90 days.

Changes have also been made to
• Teacher Preparation Programs
• Receivership
• Administration Evaluations

For more information
http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/albany/2015/03/8565264/outline-education-reform-proposals-budget