NYSUT 2006 Representative Assembly

Seven WCT / NYSUT delegates left for the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, New York, on May 4, 2006. NYSUT, the largest union in New York State, represents more than 525,000 classroom teachers and other school employees and retirees; academic and professional faculty at the state’s community colleges, State University of New York and City University of New York; and other education and health professionals. Delegates from across the state will participate in the decision of NYSUT and NEA/NY unification.


In addition, this convention will focus on helping union brothers and sisters still struggling from last summer’s hurricanes. Brenda Mitchell, president of the United Teachers of New Orleans, will be on hand to address delegates and thank the members of the union for their continued generosity.

Editor’s Note: Be sure to check out upcoming issues of the WCT COMMENTATOR for NYSUT RA 2006 updates from the delegates.

Information from April 14, 2006

NYSUT Leader
Thank You to the WCT

Dear Friends of the WCT,

As most of you know, a fire in February severely damaged our home and took our pets from us. Through this stormy time of displacement, disruption, and sometimes still disbelief, we have seen numerous silver linings. This is why we are writing the WCT to express our thanks at the outpouring of support you have all provided.

Members of the WCT, and others at the Wappingers CSD have overwhelmed us in many, wonderful ways. Thoughtful notes, toys for our two boys, gift cards, kind words, clothes for our backs, cash, babysitting, and prayers have helped sustain us. As insurance drags its feet, these generous gifts of time, considerations, and materials have become essential in buoying our spirits and keeping us moving forward. Most amazingly, on two occasions in March, colleagues of John’s arrived at our home to remove its contents and gut the insides of all the insulation and sheet-rock. In less than six hours on the second day, our house looked more like a building under new construction than the smoky, dirty mess. It looks hopeful, full of possibility. We were again, overwhelmed. John has had the pleasure of working with so many fine folks for 27+ years, and we are blessed to count you among our friends. We have been brought to tears of sadness but also tears of gratefulness for the love and caring everyone has shown us in the last two months.

Thank you so much for everything.

John, Jennifer, Tim and J.P. Hafner

Retiree: Camille Racioppo

My teaching career began on Long Island in the Plainview - Old Bethpage School District. I taught first and second grade for three years and was then a stay-at-home mom for thirteen years to raise my three children: Jackie, Renee, and Larry. Though I loved being at home for all those years, I longed to return to teaching. After moving to Wappingers Falls in 1977, I volunteered at Fishkill Plains and decided to return to school and pursue a degree in Special Education.

My career began in Wappingers as a Teacher’s Aide at Kinry Road. After completing my degree, I worked at Brinckerhoff in a self-contained classroom, then worked in a Resource Room and Integrated Classrooms at Gayhead for many years. During this time, I became interested in Orton-Gillingham methodology, a system of teaching for dyslexic students. I completed many years of training in various Orton-Gillingham programs and it changed my whole teaching career!

Now I was able to help students with language difficulties as never before and I became a believer in this system of teaching for disabled students. With my wonderful colleagues, Mary Jo Mann and Roni Maschas, we shared our new knowledge with teachers in the district through in-service courses and helped many other teachers to deliver this style of teaching to their students. It has been my rewarding work to provide students with multi-sensory teaching.

Through my current position as an Intensive Reading Coordinator, I have been able to work on an individual basis with students with reading disabilities, perform reading evaluations and recommend appropriate programs for students with reading disabilities. It has been challenging and deeply rewarding to see students with severe reading difficulties master reading and spelling.

I will truly miss all the wonderful teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators with whom I have worked in Wappingers, but I definitely will not miss the many hearings that have become too frequent in Special Education!

I look forward to a future filled with the blessings of health and happiness spent with my husband, Larry, children, and grandchildren, John, Jennifer, Luke and Dena. I long to travel and meet change with excitement. I will miss you! Thanks for the memories!
What is the EDC?
By Patricia D’Amato
John Jay High School

According to Article 14 of the WCT contract, “The District and the Congress agree that the professional personnel are, and should continue to be, a major source of developments and innovations in improving the educational programs carried on in the District.” As such, there is a central Educational Development Committee (EDC) that consists of six classroom teachers and six administrators. The Committee reports to the Superintendent of Schools. Additionally, each school should have its own EDC that considers, “…matters pertaining to the improvement of the educational program in that building.”

I first became a member of the John Jay EDC in the early 1980’s. We met monthly, and our chairperson then presented our concerns to the principal. During the late 90’s, the committee ceased meeting. After his election to the presidency of the WCT, Pasquale Delli Carpini enthusiastically encouraged all buildings to reinstate the EDC and made a great effort to establish our central committee.

At John Jay, we have been meeting monthly since January of 2005. We currently hold meetings attended only by faculty members as needed, and we meet with the entire administrative team on a monthly basis. In most other schools, the EDC meets as a separate faculty group, and then a teacher representative meets with the building principal.

At the building level we have discussed the disciplinary referral process, staffing of various duty stations, building environmental issues (heating concerns, water and air quality matters, classroom telephone service, etc.). We were instrumental in determining the type of speaker we wanted for our September Staff Development Day. While most of our meetings have been cordial, we have discovered that even when voices are raised and tempers flare, we can continue to work together for the good of our school community.

The district EDC began meeting in October. We established our procedures and then concentrated on issues raised by our members. A good deal of time was spent in discussing the school calendar; many of us felt the instructional continuity of several school weeks was compromised by the early release days and Superintendent’s Conference Day falling so close to scheduled days off for national and religious holidays. Next year’s proposed calendar addresses our concerns. We have also discussed plans for the implementation of the Tri-States accreditation system, the process of ordering supplies from the Central Warehouse, and the need for the re-establishment of a Professional Development Day committee.

There are definitely times when I have been disappointed by the slowness of the process. It has also been frustrating when I have not been able to bring satisfactory results to teachers about issues they have brought to my attention. However, I do feel that the EDC, combined with our union representation, offers a means by which we can work together to improve our schools. I am encouraged by the progress we have made and am pleased to know that, for the first time in many years, there are active Educational Development Committees in all buildings. I hope our membership supports this initiative by bringing issues to the committees and by volunteering to serve on them. The EDC gives us a voice; we must continue to utilize it in order to be heard!

Save the Date:

• Please join us in celebrating Donna Garvey, and her 35 years of teaching on Wednesday, June 14th at Torches on the Hudson - Front Street, Newburgh beginning at 4:00.

• Retirement Party for Kurt Hauptfeuhrer, in appreciation of 33 years of musical excellence at John Jay! Cocktail Hour at Greenbaum and Gilhooley’s 4 – 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 15th.

• Please join us to honor Fishkill’s retirees, Marion Pedersen-Grover and Judie Ippolito. Their retirement party will be on June 2, 2006, at 4:30 PM, at Sharpe Reservation - Camp Mariah.
RCK Students Win Business Awards

Three Roy C. Ketcham High School students received awards at the 32nd Annual Business and Computer Education Awards Program of the College of Westchester in Tarrytown, NY, on March 11, 2006. The students were entertained by keynote speaker Bo Kemp, Founder and President of the EDvance Group Inc. EDvance Group Inc. is a Westchester-based education organization developing businesses in the areas of: after-school tutoring, SAT and college application preparation, K-12 school loans, and educational software.

Accompanied by their teachers, Maryalice Goodall and Kathleen Conroy, the students received awards in the following business categories:

- Courtney Knoppel - Outstanding Determination in Computers
- Matthew Seckler - Outstanding Achievement in Business
- Jessica Hanks - Outstanding Achievement in Computers

Congratulations, Students, for a job well done!

Do You Have Private School Service?
We would like to know.
Please return this form to the WCT Office.

Name: __________________________________________

School: _________________________________________

# of years of private school service:___________________

Fishkill Plains Student Raises Autism Awareness

By Krissy Dell
5th grade teacher

I am writing to tell you about a very special young lady, Kayla Kosack. She is “one of a kind.” Kayla approached me in early February with the idea to fundraise for the charity “Pennies for Autism.”

During the month of March, the Fishkill Plains learning community donated spare change for Autism, a neurological disorder. The amount of spare change raised totaled more than $1,460.00!

This endeavor, bridging the school and local community, was the idea of Kayla. In addition, Kayla, with a little help from her parents, followed through on the collection, calculation, and donation on behalf of Fishkill Plains Elementary School.

As a culminating activity for our “Pennies for Autism” fundraiser, the Kosack family generously offered to donate pizza to the class who raised the most money. The recipient of the pizza party was Mr. McCaffrey’s fourth grade.

If you are interested in sponsoring or obtaining more information about the disease or upcoming events, please go to www.walkforautism.com.

Thank you, Kayla, for being a wonderful leader and positive role model, for and making a difference!
**Dates to Know:**
Remaining 2006 Board Meetings
May: 8th & 22nd
June: 12th & 26th
July: 10th

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May 13 - Community Picnic
May 19 - Retiree Dinner
May 29 - Memorial Day

**WCT Shirts**
Shirt forms available online at...
http://nysut.org/wappingers/shirtform.pdf

**2006 Pay Dates:**
May 19th
June 2nd
June 16th
June 23rd

**Correction:**
On the front page of the April 21st issue, in the list of retirees-to-be, Walter Capichioni’s name was misspelled. Our apologies to Walter.

**Retiree: Debora Kaiser teacher - 32 years**

My education career began in 1974 at Fishkill Plains. I was a second grade teacher then, and have worn many hats since. I was a Math Learning Specialist teaching remediation strategies to second through sixth graders. I have taught many hands-on workshops to teachers, including probability and the metric system. That program ended after 15 years, at which time I returned to a second grade classroom. Five years ago, I joined the Enrichment Team and helped to establish a new enrichment curriculum for third graders all over our district. I have taught in all of the elementary schools and even Van Wyck! I will miss the excitement of the students as they learn logical thinking and problem solving strategies. I will cherish the many connections with parents, teachers and students over the past 30 years. Since my plans include moving to a warmer climate, I will not miss snow, ice, or treacherous roadways as a traveling teacher.

**PR News**

By Emily Guthoff and Ellen Korz, PR Co-Chairs

Everybody get ready for some fun, relaxation, and good cheer. Save the date, **May 13, 2006, from noon to 3:00pm**, to come to the first annual WCT Community Picnic. Bring your families and remind your students to bring their families to Van Wyck Junior High for an afternoon filled with fun, laughter, and good cheer.

Other PR News:
On Sunday, April 2, 2006, Emily Guthoff, Ellen Korz, Audrey Ryan, Kelly Clausson, and Taryn Iorlano volunteered to work the Dutchess County United Teachers’ Committee booth at the KID’S EXPO at the Poughkeepsie Civic Center. The KID’S EXPO was crowded with enthusiastic children who enjoyed learning about the organizations in Dutchess County. There were lots of free gifts and prizes, and samplings of culinary treats. We all had a lot of fun helping the children make magnets that they could bring home. Next year, be sure to save the date to help volunteer.
Retiree: Walter Capichioni
teacher - 33 years

After having served in Vietnam while in the armed forces, Walter attended St. John’s University as an undergraduate, where he received his BS with a major in Psychology. He continued his studies at City College of New York and received a M.S. degree in School Psychology. Then in May of 1973, he began his employment in the Wappingers School District. He subsequently received his Doctorate in School/Community Psychology from Hofstra University.

Walter initially served as a School Psychologist for five of the District’s schools. As more psychologists were hired - there were only three in the District at that time - his workload was reduced.

“I’ve been working for the WCSD for the past 33 years, all of those years as a school psychologist and a member of the committee on special education. In answering the question about what I will miss most about Wappingers, I immediately ruled out the enormous amount of paper work associated with special education. The Special Ed. Department alone must be responsible for destroying at least a third of the rain forests throughout the world! Just as quickly though, I thought about the group of educators whom I have worked with throughout the years, the most caring, compassionate and sensitive human beings I have ever met; I will certainly miss them.

In terms of my future plans, I will continue teaching on a college level.”

Retiree: Darrah Dwyer
teacher - 29 years

My first 19 years in the District were spent teaching special education classes: everything from aging-in students through 13-year olds. The most memorable of these years were the Pathways classes. I then transferred into regular ed., teaching first grade for 7 years. For the past three years, I have been an itinerant teacher, working as a Kindergarten Developmental Learning Specialist.

I will greatly miss the friendship and support of my colleagues, as well as the children with whom I was privileged to work. I will not miss the seemingly endless paperwork and the bureaucracy. I plan to do volunteer work, take dance lessons, train to run a half-marathon, travel with my husband, and spend more time with my grandchildren.
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FOR RENT: Weekly rental in Charlestown, RI. Four bedroom cottage less than a mile from pristine Charlestown Beach with private beachside parking. Comfortably sleeps 8. Close proximity to Mystic, Newport, Mohegan Sun, Foxwoods and Block Island. Contact Roberta 221-9872.

VACATION RENTAL: Palmas del Mar, Puerto Rico, large 1 bedroom beachfront condo, ground floor, steps from pool and beach. Beautiful resort/community. Amenities include hotel, casino, tennis, golf & bike paths. $1,000/wk May-Nov. Call (845) 255-5053.

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FOR SALE: Queen Anne style office desk, 52x25, glass top, matching chair, $200. Universal gym, treadmill, steppers, flywheel bike. Reasonable offers. 299-7890.

FOR SALE: Like new Maytag electric glass cooktop – 30 x 21-1/2. Call 297-1837.

FOR SALE: Picnic Table. 8 feet long by 30 inches wide. Four 42 inch long benches with backs. Excellent condition. Call 462-6457.

FOR SALE: Renegades Tickets ($7.00) on Friday, July 14th at 7:05 to benefit Cystic Fibrosis. Includes fireworks. For information call Kerry at 223-9817.

FOR RENT: 1996 Nissan Sentra GXE. 111,600 miles, runs well, new brakes, new low profile tires and rims, 2nd set of tires, excellent treads. $3,500. Call Cheryl @ 896-7664.

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FOR SALE: Voucher for three graduate or undergraduate credits at Mt. St. Mary College. Voucher is good for full tuition and registration fees. Can be transferred to anyone. Call Teri at 845-453-9858 or 845-849-9143.