Welcome back! I hope you had a restful and enjoyable summer with your family and friends. Thanks to the research, hard work and the technological knowledge of Nancy Beiner, our new webmaster, the 2014-2015 school year brings us a new WCT website to better serve and communicate with our members.

The interactive website is easy to navigate, user friendly, and it contains a plethora of information, links and educational sites. It was designed specifically for the benefit and needs of the members. It is an on-line service provided by Unions-America.com, which is America's Union Internet Service Provider, offering Union Internet services to Labor including the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters and many other labor organizations. I encourage you to take advantage of this new medium of communication in order to stay better informed with the latest union news and events, and educational concerns at the national, state and local level.

One of the gravest attacks on the teaching profession is the relentless attack on tenure. Unfortunately there are many states that would like to replicate a court ruling of the Vergara v. California decision that California’s teacher tenure law is unconstitutional. In N.Y.S. there are: Davids v. State of New York –Class Action Suit against NYS Teacher tenure laws, and Campbell Brown v. NYSUT – Challenge to NYS tenure laws.

Dear members, these attacks are real and dangerous to our profession and our daily practices as teachers! We need to be vigilant and proactive in defending this vital safeguard for teachers that has been in existence for more than one hundred years. “No person enjoying the benefit of tenure shall be disciplined or removed during a term of employment except for just cause ... ” (NYS education Law § 3020) such as pedagogical incompetence, misconduct, physical or mental disability.

Continued page 7, TENURE
In co-teaching you share teaching time, you bounce ideas and disciplinary issues off one another and you have two brains to tackle everyday classroom activities, planning and assessment. It is a “creative way to connect with and help all children” (Corwin). It is also a chance to incorporate new ideas as well as technology as you have a partner to help you work out the kinks. What could be better than having a partner in crime?

Co-teaching is not job-sharing. It is not one teacher using the copy machine or grading papers while the other teaches the class. It is not one teacher sitting or standing to the side. It is not co-teaching when one teacher’s ideas prevail over the other teacher. Co-teaching is not tutoring.

There are a few “musts” in a co-taught classroom:

Protect: There needs to be mutual respect to create a true co-teaching environment. Each teacher needs to respect one another as a qualified professional. Special education teachers play the role of “master strategist” not “master of the subject”. A special education teacher has a toolbox of differentiated strategies that can be applied to any classroom environment. Furthermore, both teachers need to respect each other’s teaching styles. Though they may be different, each can bring a
a new outlook and be effective in the classroom. The different teaching styles can be combined to create an unstoppable force.

**Shared Power:** Shared power can be seen! It can be seen on the board by having both teachers’ names visible to all students. This shows the students that the teachers are working as a unit. They also need to see both teachers’ names on handouts and assignments headings. This reinforces that the teachers are working together as one. Whenever emails go home to parents or out to administrators both teachers’ names should be signed. The class web page should have both teachers’ names on it as well.

Another important way to create a co-taught classroom is by each co-teacher having a desk in the classroom. Teachers should ask administration to provide a desk for each teacher. When this is not possible, the co-teachers should share the one desk. When our students see my co-teacher and I sitting together at one desk in front of the classroom, it says to them “look they work together, they are the same position.” This is an important visual for students to see and creates shared power.

Shared power means grading should be done by both teachers. ALERT! This does not mean the general education teacher only grades the general education students and the special education teacher only grades the special education students. Teachers should develop a system that works for them. However, both teachers need to see the abilities within in their room in order to assess what needs to be reinforced to meet students’ needs.

Shared power includes shared teaching time. Each teacher needs to teach in the front of the classroom where students see both teachers instructing the class. Now, this can be difficult if it is the first year working together or the first year teaching a new subject or grade level. There are some beginner team tricks to start off your co-teaching partnership. One teacher can get the students focused and review homework from the night or what the class covered the previous day. This teacher can also lead test reviews or similar activities. This way the new teacher to the subject matter is not delivering new material he or she is uncomfortable with and is still getting in front of the class.

The only way to create a true co-teaching environment is to share the power both mentally and physically. Too many times my students were unclear of my role in the classroom. During my first year my students would ask me “Miss. D, are you a real teacher?” They thought I was a teaching assistant. As a new teacher that was soul crushing! I had my Master’s degree in education, yet my students didn’t know who I was. Teaching assistants play an important role of assisting and supporting teachers and students, but that is different from a classroom teacher’s role. The power was clearly not being shared. In order for both teachers to be respected by their students, the students must see their teachers as equals.

Dr. Marilyn Friend identifies six co-teaching models that should be incorporated into the classroom. They are *One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist; Parallel Teaching; Station Teaching; Alternative Teaching;* and *Team Teaching* (see box page 6).
September is a wonderful time for new beginnings. Both students and teachers are excited about all the possibilities of learning, teaching, and seeing old friends and making new ones.

Like many of you, when I started teaching 19 years ago I had a burning desire to make a difference and teach my children not just academic knowledge, but also knowledge about life and being the best people they could be. I still have that desire, but the road of teaching has taken many sharp turns without any warning signs, and we have risen to the occasion.

This fire, however, is burning out for so many dedicated teachers. Many teachers today are feeling "burnt out." What does that mean? When teachers are burnt out it means they are stressed physically, emotionally, and mentally to the point where they cannot function to the best of their ability.

Teachers have many demands placed upon them and that is part of the job, however, when they become too much there needs to be support. When teachers are not at their best, their students don't receive the best education. For several years now there has been lots of reform to help our children achieve more and work at a more "rigorous" level.

As I said before, we have and continue to rise to the occasion; but there is a missing piece. The individual teacher is being overlooked; there is only so much pressure a human being can take; it isn’t fair or responsible to expect our teachers to handle all the changes so quickly and not have any consequences. Many teachers are retiring early, leaving the profession, or going out on disability.

They are losing their spark or "fire" and becoming machines, and machines break down (not just copy machines). We are not machines, we are human. I don't know the answer to this problem, but my goal in writing this piece is to raise awareness and to start talking about it; there are teachers suffering in silence. Let's talk about how to reignite and keep that flame going for ourselves, but most of all for our students, because that is the whole reason we do what we do; we inspire.

How do you maintain your “fire” and stay healthy?

Would you be interested in creating and being part of a support group?

Write to Traci: commentator@optimum.net
On Monday night, the Board of Education approved several changes to the WCT APPR Plan document, including form changes, that were agreed to by the District and the WCT:

Changes to the appeals procedure outlined in section IV of the Plan document that provide a procedure for teachers to file an appeal regarding the implementation of a Teacher Improvement Plan. Although the Plan previously provided teachers with this right, the Plan did not specify a procedure. This change was requested by NYSED during the review of our Plan.

Change to the Professional Growth Plan Evaluation form. A reference was added to indicate that teacher evidence will determine the evaluator's rating of the teacher's Professional Growth Plan and the HEDI ratings were added to the form to indicate that the four rating categories are aligned to the HEDI ratings as per NYSED regulations. This change was requested by NYSED during review of our Plan.

Two new teacher job titles, Special Education Teacher Non-Public School and Professional Development Specialist, were added as teachers who will use the Pre-Observation Form, Observation Form, and Evaluation Form for WCT unit members who are not "teachers of record" as defined in NYSED APPR guidance documents.

A copy of the revised Plan document, including a copy of all forms, is attached and will be permanently posted on the District website under QuickLinks on the home page.
True Co-Teaching

Continued from page 3

**Planning Time:** Administration should include a shared teacher prep period into the co-taught teachers’ schedules. I cannot stress enough how important it is to plan together. If there is no shared planning time then it is not co-teaching. Both teachers need to be fully aware of what will be transpiring in the classroom every day. Neither teacher should ever be surprised about what material is going to be covered.

Nothing takes away power faster from a co-teacher than not knowing what the class is doing that day. It is the responsibility of both teachers to plan together. Students can easily pick up on whether or not the co-teachers know what is going on. As soon as they see one teacher unaware of the day’s lesson, it is clear who is in charge.

A good tip is to try to always be planned at least a week ahead. This way each teacher knows what is coming and what information he or she may need to brush up on and prepare for. In a true partnership, I am always able to read ahead, study vocabulary lists, and gather any questions I may have to ask my partner. Students are able to turn to both of us for help. I am able to deliver our material with confidence and feel as though it is my room too.

If co-teaching partners follow some of these simple rules, the teachers can create a true co-teaching environment. As Dr. Friend says, co-teaching at its best is “one brain with two bodies.”

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**Dr. Marilyn Friend’s Six Approaches to Co-teaching**

1. One Teach, One Observe. One of the advantages in co-teaching is that more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process can occur. With this approach, for example, co-teachers can decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data. Afterward, the teachers should analyze the information together.

2. One Teach, One Assist. In a second approach to co-teaching, one person would keep primary responsibility for teaching while the other professional circulated through the room providing unobtrusive assistance to students as needed.

3. Parallel Teaching. On occasion, student learning would be greatly facilitated if they just had more supervision by the teacher or more opportunity to respond. In parallel teaching, the teachers are both covering the same information, but they divide the class into two groups and teach simultaneously.

4. Station Teaching. In this co-teaching approach, teachers divide content and students. Each teacher then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third station could give students an opportunity to work independently.

5. Alternative Teaching: In most class groups, occasions arise in which several students need specialized attention. In alternative teaching, one teacher takes responsibility for the large group while the other works with a smaller group.

6. Team Teaching: In team teaching, both teachers are delivering the same instruction at the same time. Some teachers refer to this as having one brain in two bodies. Others call it tag team teaching. Most co-teachers consider this approach the most complex but satisfying way to co-teach, but the approach that is most dependent on teachers’ styles.
Under the § 3020a due process of fair dismissal of a tenured teacher, the member has the right to know the charges. The right to see, confront and rebut the evidence, the right to an impartial decision maker, and the right to counsel. If these procedural protections were not in place we could be fired for arbitrary and capricious reasons. “Only teachers have tenure” is a myth! State, municipal federal civil service, private sector workers under union contracts and private employment contracts also have tenure. Then, why is only teacher tenure being attacked?

These politically motivated attacks would like to take away from teachers fundamental rights that every American enjoys in this great country with the fourteenth Amendment: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

In the absence of tenure we could be fired for any reason: students achievement on a state test, APPR scores (both very flawed), becoming too expensive, too outspoken, advocating for a special needs student in regards to state ed regulations, addressing health and safety issues in the classroom etc. A century ago tenure was introduced also because school board members instituted and enforced the many rules governing teachers’ lives. Female teachers for example, could be fired if they married or became pregnant. A teacher could be fired based on their belief, race, or if a board member wanted to hire a relative, or politically hire someone for personal gain.

Tenure also gives us academic freedom (teachers have limited first Amendment rights) to ensure that quality education is delivered in the classroom and not simply teach to the “test” without fear of reprisal from administrators or board members. Tenure gives teachers the freedom to teach all subjects free of political bias and it gives us the ability to protect student education from institutionalized bigotry.

In the WCT office there is the January 14th 2004 issue of the New York Teacher... Barbara Searle, a great John Jay English teacher (retired) is on the cover holding the book: Bless Me Ultima with the caption: Defending the right to read. She (was) is the educational hero who stood up to ignorance, incompetence, and the banning of the book. Her students will have that event embedded in their minds for the rest of their lives. Could Barbara have defended the rights of her students without tenure and retained her employment? What immeasurable and grave loss that would have been for her students!

These laws allow teachers to speak out against policies like excessive standardized testing that harm our students and enrage their parents. These laws ensure teachers’ right not to be discriminated against based on race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. These laws also prevent districts from laying-off the most experienced and skilled teachers in order to save money. Tenure works at many different levels: insulates teachers from political pressure, it ensures stability, experience, knowledge and dedicated service to our students.

NYSUT is taking a proactive stance, on August 29, 2014 it “moved to intervene in the Wright v. New York as a defender of tenure, which, for more than a century, has allowed New York’s teachers to teach and advocate effectively for students while protecting good teachers against unfair firing.”

I’m proud to report that five WCT members were invited to be trained and become Communications Ambassadors on Tenure this past August. The members invited to participate in this endeavor were National Board Certified: Diane Di Chiara, Rena Finsmith, Christine Zandstra, WCT treasurer Donna Kart and me. It is comforting to know that we have members that are willing to be on the forefront of this fight.
Since 2009 the majority of the states have “reformed” tenure laws. Several states have eliminated tenure like Kansas, North Carolina, Florida and others. Do we want the same thing to happen to us in New York State? It goes hand in hand with attacks on collective bargaining e.g. Wisconsin. (NYSUT)

Michael Lyons, after twenty-five years of dedicated service to the WCT in different capacities, including V.P. Elementary is stepping down as a member of the WCT Executive Board. On behalf of all the members, I would like to thank Michael for his guidance, wisdom, and insight on union activities that he has shared with us over the years. On a personal note, Michael was always there for me, especially during difficult and frustrating times. His words of wisdom, his experience, his support and above all his friendship have encouraged me to forge forth with confidence and pride. Let’s take the opportunity to wish Michael the very best, and to enjoy the extra time with family and friends.

LET’S MAKE THIS YEAR THE BEST YET!

In Solidarity,

Pasquale Delli Carpini

National Board Update: August 2014
NB Exceptional Needs 2003, Renewed 2013

By Diane D. DiChiara

Are you a National Board Candidate for 2014-2015?

Please contact Ronnie Dwyer at the WCT at 227-5065. We would like to compile a list of all candidates for this school year.

What’s new with National Board Certification?

National Board has revised the certification process; therefore, candidates will not be able to complete the process in one year. It will take 3 years for the new process to be completed.

During 2014-2015, candidates will be able to complete Component 1: Content Knowledge - this is the test portion of the process and is taken at a Pearson Assessment Center and Component 2: Differentiation in Instruction - a written entry (this may also be the video component). In 2015-2016, Component 3: Teaching Practice and Learning Environment will be added and in 2016-2017, Component 4: Effective and Reflective Practitioner will be added.

NB does not have the Career and Technical Certificate ready for this year; it will be ready for 2015-2016.

According to NB, Components 1 and 2 will not be ready until October 2014; however, candidates may sign-up now.

Continue Page 10 NATIONAL
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<td>Columbus Day</td>
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<td>Superintendent’s Conference Day</td>
<td>22-24 Tues-Wednesday Elementary students attend in the morning only</td>
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<td>20, 21, 24</td>
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<td>26, 28 Wed - Fri</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess</td>
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2014 SEPTEMBER: Students do not attend school.

2015 JANUARY: Students do not attend school.

SC = Superintendent’s Conference Day - Students do not attend school

½ PD = Professional Development Half Day – Students attend school in the morning only

If more than 5 emergency days are used, the make-up days will be as follows:

1st day: April 6; 2nd day: March 30; 3rd day: March 31; 4th day: April 1; 5th day: April 2

If fewer than 5 emergency days are used, the return days will be as follows:

1st day: May 22; 2nd day: March 27; 3rd day: May 21
What about NB grants?

There has been no further information about the Shanker and Candidate Subsidy Fee Grant. In the past, candidates have had the entire process, less $65.00 paid for by these grants. More information to follow.

How can the WCT support candidates?

President Delli Carpini and the Wappingers Congress of Teachers (WCT) have been long supporters of NB certification. Therefore, this year the WCT has provided $1,200.00 to help support candidates through the process. This money can be used to attend the Mid-Hudson Teacher Center National Board Writing Workshops (full days at the NYSUT Kingston office). These workshops are usually offered in January and February. I am also working with NYSUT ELT (Education and Learning Trust) to develop workshops to address each new NB component. As you know, due to the change in the NB process the 45-hour (3 credit) NB Support Group can no longer be offered. We are looking at 15-hour courses for components 2, 3 and 4 and a 3-hour seminar for component 1. Members would also be able to apply for the WCT grant for these courses. A WCT application will be available in October.

I'm signed-up. What should I be doing prior to October?

At this point, if you have signed-up for NB, you should read and memorize the 5 Core Propositions. The certificate standards are based on these propositions. You should also be reading, note-taking, studying and re-reading the standards for your certificate area. These are available on the NB website at http://www.boardcertifiedteachers.org.

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WCSD SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCES NINETEEN

On May 9, 2014 in a ceremony held at Christo’s in Poughkeepsie, the Thomas D. Macrini Sports Hall of Fame inducted 19 athletes and coaches, bringing its total number of inductees to 436. In addition, 1 special service recipient was honored for her outstanding contribution to the WCSD athletic program. The total number of special service honorees now totals 48. Inductees this year included: Jan W. Brown and Patricia Bruner from WHS…Katie (O’Brien) Dunstan, Delmiro Fernandez, Maria Semertzides, Renee Foster and Barbara Deppe (Coach), Daniel Jason Garland, Christopher Hart, Brian Fornabaio, Delmiro Fernandez, Matthew Lockwood, and Kristen Turner from John Jay. The Special Service recipient this year was Julia E. Eurillo.

Since its inception in 1989, the Hall of Fame has honored former athletes, having graduated at least 10 years prior, and retired coaches for their distinguishing accomplishments in their respective sports. If you wish to nominate an athlete or coach, please contact the district athletic office at 298-5100, Ext. 31196 for information.
This summer several members of the Wappingers Congress of Teachers were invited by NYSUT to become Communications Ambassadors on Tenure. Pasquale Delli Carpini, Donna Kart, Christine Zandstra, Rena Finsmith and I traveled to NYSUT headquarters where we attended several workshops. Topics included the history of tenure, NYS tenure laws, millionaires and ideologies, and developing partnerships with parents. We learned communication strategies that began with using a positive, proactive approach. We also learned how to reframe a question and to pivot when necessary. We practiced with various scenarios and were then interviewed and videotaped by NYSUT.

Why is defending tenure so important? In June, a lower-court’s ruling in Vegara v. California dismantled the state’s tenure laws. NYS is not California and has stricter tenure laws; however, in July two parents on behalf of their children filed copycat lawsuits. They claim that NYS tenure laws deprive students of their right to a sound basic education, by making it too hard to fire a tenured teacher, by providing for seniority protections for layoff and because a three-year probation period is too short (NYSUT). The cases are Davids v. New York and Wright v. New York.

Perhaps you have heard of Campbell Brown? She is a former news anchor who heads up Partnership for Educational Justice. Brown claims that teacher tenure is responsible for low student achievement. As of this date, she has not disclosed her financial backers and her organization is bankrolling the Wright case. Brown and other anti-tenure and anti-unionists do not take into account poverty, parents’ level of education and income, segregation, and school resources when they attack tenure. Brown has stated, “it takes on average 830 days to fire a teacher who’s been found to be incompetent.”

In NYS the process has been reformed to be quicker and less costly, with most cases resolved within 5 months (NYSUT). Furthermore, Brown says she is “not about blaming teachers,” but “blaming the teachers unions because they’re fighting attempts to change laws that are anachronistic, that everybody thinks need to change.” By blaming unions, isn’t she clearly blaming the teachers who make up the unions? Watch the complete interview on The Colbert Report at http://thecolbertreport.cc.com/full-episodes/0salbz/july-31--2014---campbell-brown

How can you as a member defend tenure? Don’t respond to negativity with negativity – reframe the question in a pro-active manner. Know what you want to communicate and avoid being sidetracked. Remember these three points about tenure:

• Tenure is a safeguard that ensures that good teachers can speak up for what students need.
• Tenure is a safeguard that protects good teachers from unfair firing – a basic due (fair) process right.
• Tenure is working in NYS. The process has been reformed (2012) and is faster and more cost efficient, with most cases now resolved in 5 months. NYSSs many safeguards for teacher quality ensure that its teaching force is among the best credentialed, most effective in the nation.

As teachers we all need to be “the voice they cannot ignore in regards to tenure” (NYSUT President Magee). While five members attended the Communications Ambassadors on Tenure workshop, all WCT members must act as ambassadors. We need to let it be known that low student performance is connected to poverty and the lack of school resources among other issues. As teachers we must band together with the same message: Tenure ensures that children have good teachers.

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THE WCT WELFARE TRUST FUND

Trustees:

Flip Gertler    Chairperson
Theresa Stowel  Treasurer
Erin Mulligan   Secretary
Kim Mahusky     Trustee
Pasquale Delli Carpini Trustee

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

WCT OFFICE: 845-227-5065
DANIEL H. COOK 800-342-6651
MIRKIN & GORDON (LAWYERS) 914-997-1576
DAVIS VISION 800-999-5431
STACY BRAUN ASSOC (FINANCIAL) 888-949-1925
HEALTH ADVOCATE 866-695-8622

DIRECTIONS TO WCT OFFICE

2537 ROUTE 52, SUITE 15
HOPEWELL JUNCTION, NY 12533

- Heritage Square complex east of Rt 376 and 52 and west of the Taconic
- Enter parking lot and make second right
- Use front entrance
- Go to 2nd floor, door at the end Suite 15