



UNION-EYES

Newsletter of the East Ramapo Teachers Association
Looking out for you

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WELCOME

Welcome to Union-Eyes, the newest publication of the East Ramapo Teachers Association. This newsletter will keep you informed about Union issues and many other things you should keep your eyes on in East Ramapo. Send us your feedback about the newsletter and any suggestions as to what you would like us to cover. We hope you enjoy this first issue.

What Have You Done For Me Lately?

By Tony Stephens

In these trying times of Ebola, ISIS and APPR, teachers can take solace in knowing that ERTTA has your back. Everything seems to be going just fine and then BAM! You find that friendly note in your mailbox to meet with your building principal and to bring a union rep. Of course you find this on a Friday afternoon because the building administrators didn't want to burden you with it during the work week.

Your mind swirls all weekend wondering what you did or didn't do. What wasn't completed on time, what was sent to Docutech, which pre-assessment was missing questions 17-20, or were there too many staples on your bulletin board? What in the name of Jimmy Hoffa could it be?

Take heart. You are not in this alone. Each building has elected ERTTA Building Representatives and a Chief Building Rep to assist you with building level issues that may arise. Every teacher should get to know at least one Building Rep. When you need help with union related issues, this is the person to contact to get the ball rolling. In a perfect world (with a perfect principal), 98% of all situations would be settled at the building level. At the end of every principal/ teacher meeting smiles would be exchanged, sincere thank yous would be in order, hand-shakes would be shared and maybe even the occasional hug would happen. The teacher would walk out with a smile knowing that the building administrator is a true colleague who is always looking out for his/her best interest. Yeah, and pigs might fly.

So, if your issue cannot be immediately solved at the building level, there are a plethora of options available for your protection. The next step is often ERTTA's Status and Ethics Committee. The role of Status and Ethics is to provide trained ERTTA Representatives from outside your building to act as a second front in solving your problem. Many times, Status and Ethics can provide that extra little "push" a building administrator may need to decide to do the right thing.

If Status and Ethics is not successful or is not necessarily the right avenue for your case, a grievance may be warranted. ERTTA's Grievance Committee is made up of specially trained teachers who will take over your case and pursue a solution on a number of different levels as stated in the Contract. Our Grievance Committee has an excellent track record for helping East Ramapo teachers obtain a level of satisfaction when they feel they have been wronged by building administration (unfortunately, a common occurrence).

Finally, if all attempts at diplomacy fail, the Grievance Committee may take the issue to arbitration. Arbitration is essentially court. Attorneys are brought in to argue the case before a jointly selected arbitrator, who will render a final decision on your case. When it comes to protecting members, ERTTA will exhaust all means necessary to defend the contract and safeguard your rights in any situation where you have been wronged. So next time that you are faced with injustice from a vengeful and bitter building administrator, remember WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.

Grievance Chair: George Bielski, Status & Ethics Chair: Tony Stephens, Committee Members: Brian Restivo - Maxine Simon - Allison Cooperman - Mark Berkowitz - Jennifer Nugent

Modern cynics and skeptics... see no harm in paying those to whom they entrust the minds of their children a smaller wage than is paid to those to whom they entrust the care of their plumbing. ~John F. Kennedy

Important Dates:

Early Retirement incentive - If you are going to retire in June 2015, and you qualify and want to receive the \$19,500 early retirement incentive you must sign and file your Declaration of Intent to Retire by December 31, 2014. Read the contract carefully to be sure you qualify, then follow all the required procedures. Check with ERTA if you have any questions or need more information.

Request for Transfer or reassignment for the next school year – You must send a written statement to the Director of Personnel prior to February 15, 2015. Include grade and/or subject and building(s) to which you desire to be transferred. Again read the contract for full details of the procedure you must follow. Check with ERTA if you have any questions. Your request will be kept on record for 2 years, unless it is withdrawn.

ALPHABET SOUP

Do you know your ABC's? There are so many acronyms in education that you can easily get lost in the Alphabet Soup. Let's see if this easy quiz can help you out.

1. ERTA

- A. Easy Raises To Approve (you wish)
- B. East Ramapo Teachers Association

2. SLO

- A. Student Learning Outcomes
- B. Some Lousy Observation

3. RTI

- A. Really Thankless Individual
- B. Response to Intervention

ANSWERS:

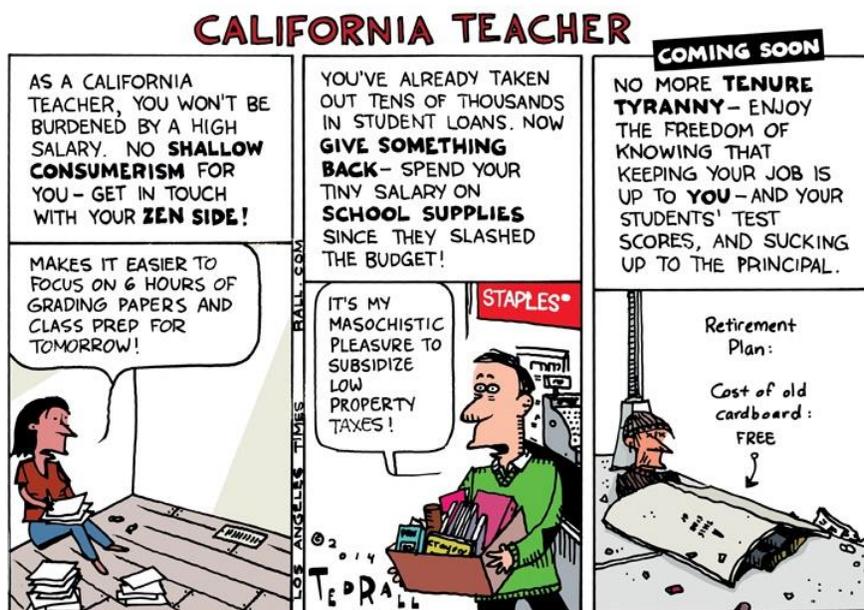
- 1. B
- 2. A
- 3. B

If you got any of these wrong, it's ok. (If you got number 1 wrong, you might be teaching in a different district. Please check your paystub)

DID YOU KNOW?

The IRS has increased the mileage rate from 51 cents to 56 cents? With gasoline prices the way they are now, if you are asked to drive to a Math training conference in China you will receive over \$3,000 in mileage cash from the district!

Sounds Familiar!



Ad-Tabs Returns

Before e-bay, before Alibaba, even before Amazon, there was Ad-Tabs, the marketplace of the East Ramapo Teachers Association. Now we are bringing it back, to provide a way to reach the members of ERTA with goods or services you want to sell or donate. Ad-Tab listings are free to all ERTA members and available to members of other bargaining units in our District for a \$5.00 fee. If you have something to sell, give it a try. Caveat emptor: ERTA does not endorse or guarantee any items and will only accept advertisements that are appropriate. Send your ad to ERTA by email or courier. Include a complete description, the asking price and your contact information.

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