



UNION-EYES

Newsletter of the East Ramapo Teachers Association
Looking out for you

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Construction Bond Vote Fails

By Rita Bass

On Tuesday, February 3rd East Ramapo voters rejected a \$40 million bond proposal slated to address deteriorating conditions in our school buildings. The outcome was a disappointment and a wake-up call. An extremely low voter turnout reinforced the belief that the private school community chose to remain neutral and left it up to the public school community to determine what to do. Yet, the bond was defeated 626 - 472.



To ERTTA, the message seemed clear that our schools need much more support from our public school community. Although we had endorsed the bond through a telephone calling campaign, ERTTA wanted to be able to do more in the future. As a result, we have initiated a number of projects to build communication and trust between teachers and the parent community. Two of these projects: First Book and a Math Workshop on Common Core are already in the planning stages. Other outreach and political action events are being considered.

This picture, taken in one of our schools, exemplifies the way the poor physical conditions are impacting teachers' abilities to utilize

resources and focus on instruction. Here the library had to be closed due to the serious water leaks. This is only one example of many leaks and buckets in hallways and classrooms around the district.

The district may decide to put the bond up for a second vote. If this happens we hope to garner enough support to help the bond pass. We need to put conspiracy theories aside and act in a practical, rational way to improve the teaching and learning conditions in our district.

President's Message

During your career in East Ramapo you may be asked to join or you may decide to volunteer for a committee whose work will trickle down to effect instructional programs involving your colleagues. Before you participate in any such committee, please be aware of Article III in our contract. The section devoted to "Development and Implementation of Curriculum and Related Educational Programs" establishes the Curriculum Planning Board, consisting of District administrators and ERTA members, jointly charged with initiating, reviewing, developing and recommending curriculum and instructional programs and procedures. Occasionally CPB will form sub-committees to further these goals.

At times over the years, District administrators have attempted to circumvent CPB by seeking teacher volunteers without ERTA involvement. Often the results are unfavorable. The district has its own agenda, which rarely reflects teacher needs, yet these committees allow the district to claim that teachers as well as administrators are responsible.

Remember if you are asked or want to volunteer for District committees, it is in everyone's best interest for you to contact ERTA first. Always check that teacher selection and participation on any committee is following proper protocol.

In Solidarity,
Alan Teshler, President

"Teaching is the only profession where you steal things from home to bring them to work."

~ found on an e-card

FYI: Postings to Facebook or other social media sites are not private. Do not put anything on the internet that you would not want a current or future employer to see. Also, e-mails and text messages can be saved and shared. Potentially, this information could be used against you in the future. Your school computer and your district email account belongs to your employer, who has the right to access the information. Be judicious in anything you say in these settings.

ERTA Self-Defense Tactics

By Tony Stephens

Life is not the same as it used to be for teachers. We have been forced onto the battlefield of APPR and TIPS and need to protect ourselves. At the forefront of this melee is the East Ramapo Teachers Association. Like any force to be reckoned with, it is of the utmost importance that our building reps are ready to enter the battle whenever needed. Building Reps are the first line of defense in enforcing our contract and protecting our colleagues. A knowledgeable and capable building rep can be the difference between having a member unfairly written up or showing an administrator that ERTA protects its members and won't back down.

ERTA is one of the busiest teacher unions in New York State. Luckily, we have the right people in place to offer assistance. We must, however, continuously hone our skills. To help with this effort, the ERTA Status and Ethics/ Grievance Committee will be holding two wine and cheese informationals during the month of March. Our goal is to cover the **Top 10 Most Important Things Every Building Rep Should Know** and to discuss key **defensive tactics** that always come in handy when dealing with administration.

This meeting is for all Chief Building Reps, Building Reps and any future prospects who want to learn a bit about being a Building Rep. Whether you are a seasoned rep from one of the "busy buildings" or have never had the opportunity to serve as a co-worker's representative in a time of need, you WILL learn something new. Meetings are scheduled for:

Secondary Building Representatives – Tuesday, March 24, 2015 from 4-6pm at the ERTA Office.

Elementary Building Representatives – Tuesday, March 31, 2015 from 4-6pm at the ERTA Office.

Beverages and snacks will be served. Due to parking issues, it may be a good idea to carpool with others from your building. Hope to see you there!

Do You Remember the Magic of Your First Book?

First Book, a joint project of ERTA and NYSUT, should soon be underway. We expect the delivery of thousands of books to take place sometime this month. The District is supporting this project by allowing us to use its warehouse at 557 New Hempstead Road. A large tractor trailer will be doing the delivery, but we will need many volunteers to help unpack, sort and distribute.



Felicia Vaccaro, a reading teacher at Hempstead, is coordinating this effort. She has been planning and working on it for many weeks. Also, librarians and reading teachers have offered to guide the sorting and leveling, but many more hands will be needed.

Your building reps will contact you soon with details about when the unpacking will take place. Volunteers will be asked to give a few hours each so we can be ready to distribute the books during the week following the delivery. Look for more information in the near future.

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. FBA

- A. Functional Behavior Assessment
- B. Find Bad Attitudes

2. PTC

- A. Professionals Talking Creatively
- B. Parent Teacher Conference

3. UPK

- A. Universal Pre-Kindergarten
- B. Underaged People Kicking

ANSWERS:

What a coincidence! For this issue, ALL Answers are Correct!!!

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Rita Bass – Treasurer

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to launch its newly created online Financial Planning Center to assist NYSUT members & their families with making a variety of important financial decisions.



Whether you have questions about retirement planning, saving for college or considering purchasing a home, the Financial Planning Center offers valuable tools & resources to assist you. Take the time to check out everything this new section of our website has to offer and remember to bookmark it as we will continue to offer new items on a regular basis.

This unique resource provides NYSUT members with free access to the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial calculators• An interactive planning module• Customized Kiplinger’s retirement newsletter | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kiplinger’s Annual Retirement Guide• 403(b) Field Guide• Preventive Law Guides• And more to come |
|--|---|

To access the NYSUT Member Benefits Financial Planning Center, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on “Financial Planning Center.”



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.