

HTA Newsletter

Hudson Teachers Association Newsletter

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APPR Update

Because of the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law while we work through the process of reaching a fair agreement with the district all sections of our current contract continue without modification. This includes salary, working conditions, insurance, and evaluation process. Once an agreement is reached and a new APPR is negotiated we will fall under the new Commissioner's Regulations and state law. Until then everyone will be evaluated using the APPR that was updated November 2007. If any administrator tries to work outside of this APPR please notify your building representative and Jack Beyer immediately.

Attached to this email is a copy of the APPR process and approved forms that must be used until a successor agreement is ratified.

VOTE-COPE – Wayne Kinney Vote Cope Representative and Committee 100

VOTE/COPE stands for Voice of Teachers in Education and the Committee on Political Education. It is a political action fund used by NYSUT to advocate for legislation beneficial to public education and teachers. 40% is used locally by the HTA to support the school budget and elect pro-education members to the Board of Education. 60% is used by NYSUT to advocate at the state and federal levels for policies that benefit public education.

How does VOTE/COPE help me?

Funds are used to help members by lobbying for:

- Increased funding for education from Albany and Washington
- Fair retirement benefits for all members
- A fair system of teacher evaluation based on multiple measures of success
- Significant reforms to No Child Left Behind
- Union backed autism bill becomes law: this change in law will save schools and governments \$13 million a year in special education, Medicaid and social services costs.
- Extend Millionaires tax which is set to expire at the end of the year.
- NYSUT continues to push for fairness in taxes: The union and its coalition partners are broadening the income tax discussion to support increased revenues, which includes a call for a fairer tax policy overall.

Through the efforts of NYSUT and our lobbyists, Senator Gillibrand continues to be a strong supporter of legislation that encourages investment in our education work force. She voted for the teachers and first responders back to work act as well as supporting and voting for the Hiring to restore employment act, which became law in March 2010. Through your continued VOTE/COPE contributions NYSUT and your local union will continue to lobby state and federal legislators to support and vote for legislation that is beneficial to our profession.

The Coming Legislation Session

from Pete McMahon MidHudson Regional VoteCope Coordinator

While we struggle with the effects of aid cuts each day, be aware that your school board and superintendent are out there fighting for “education”. Let NY Work, a group of business, local government and education advocates (among them the NYS School Boards and Council of School Superintendents) unveiled its plan to “help” with mandate relief. Mandates usually refer to requirements imposed by legislation when local school districts ignore certain segments of the school age population.

The six points developed by this coalition are:

1. Make the pension system predictable and affordable
2. Redefine compulsory arbitration
3. Reduce the costs of construction on public/private projects
4. Freeze step increases when contracts expire
5. Establish minimum health insurance contribution level for employees and retirees (basically increase employee contributions)
6. Prohibit new mandates

You will note that this “relief” targets employee rights we have fought had for and achieved in the legislature over the past decades. This is the agenda that was tried (and succeeded) in Wisconsin and Ohio. It will not happen here IF each member understands the need for strong political action – through direct communication with your legislators when the time is right and through contributing to Vote Cope. **Be aware – in the last legislative cycle corporations out raised unions fifteen to one (15-1) nationally and three to one (3-1) in New York State.**

A Letter from Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO

Ohioans overwhelmingly voted to repeal Senate Bill 5—Gov. John Kasich’s attack on middle-class jobs that was designed to destroy collective bargaining rights in Ohio.

We pieced together a short, powerful video summing up the amazing energy that went into this. I hope you’ll take a moment to watch:



[Watch now.](#)

Tonight’s victory represents a turning point in our collective work to protect good jobs, working families and workplace rights. But it’s more than that. It’s a long-overdue return to common sense.

From the very beginning of our jobs crisis, anti-worker politicians like Ohio’s Gov. Kasich have used our poor economy to push a cynical political agenda that favors the richest 1 percent at the expense of the 99 percent. Today, Ohio voters rejected that agenda.

During this campaign, firefighters, nurses, teachers and other public employees were joined by construction workers, bakery workers and all kinds of private-sector workers. They came together to ensure the survival of the middle class. And together, we’ll keep doing it. Politicians who side with the richest 1 percent will find their radical efforts stopped by working people who want America to work for everyone.

[Watch the energy and dedication that went into this huge victory—and join us.](#)

This is *our* moment, and we won with solidarity. We won because the working people of Ohio—public and private sector, union and nonunion—stood together.

But the solidarity went even further than that: Volunteers traveled not just from neighboring Wisconsin—but from states as far away as California and New York—to help get out the vote. And activists from dozens of states as far away as Alaska gave up their nights and weekends to call Ohio voters from home.

Solidarity means that when workers anywhere are under attack, we will all do whatever we can to help. It means we're in it together.

[Watch our video. See what solidarity looks like.](#)

I hope you'll celebrate this moment in your own way. But the most important thing is to find a way to keep your own energy going and growing—so you can be a part of sustaining and growing our movement for all working people—the 99 percent.

This fight we've taken on and won—and the threats we face going forward—are about more than Democrats or Republicans, or 2012 battleground states. They are about good jobs and our right to a voice on the job.

Together, we're building a new kind of politics. A politics that works for the 99 percent, not just the 1 percent.

We've got to start getting ready now to win tomorrow's victories. Over time—together—we'll build a future that works for working America.

Thank you for being a part of this movement, and for all you do for America's workers.

In Solidarity,

Richard L. Trumka
President, AFL-CIO

HTA Scholarship Fund

The HTA has sponsored a raffle that helps pay for one of our students to become a teacher. The 10/10 Club uses the majority of the money for the scholarship and the rest goes to the weekly raffle winner. Last year's recipient was Deidre Berth. The raffle is being conducting this fall and again in the spring. Please see your Building Representative to participate – HS Shannon Hoose, JHS Lisa Dwyer, MCSIS Marlene Parmentier and JLE Melissa Brown

From the Desk of the President

State takes step to improve test integrity

Starting in 2012-13, New York teachers will not grade their own students' state standardized tests. Instead, districts will use external, regional or computerized scoring, but it is not clear at this time how the new grading system will be implemented. Approved this week by the Board of Regents, the move may cause changes in the Regents exam schedule.



NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira said the state needs to find funding and ensure that testing costs are not pushed down to school districts. There are many operational issues, especially for small and rural school districts. The union is pressing for protections for staff members who report test administration problems. For full story, [click here](#)

NYSUT and coalition members build momentum on extension of Millionaire's Tax

NYSUT political activists and the 99 New York coalition are gaining traction in the effort to extend the so-called [Millionaire's Tax](#) -- a surcharge on the state's wealthiest residents implemented two years ago and due to expire Dec. 31. Activists and union leaders need to keep up the pressure on legislators and the governor. Here are some [faxes you can send and share](#) with your members.

This week, the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus [announced its support](#) for the surcharge, as well. At stake is \$5 billion in revenue at a time when vital public services including education and health care have sustained billions of dollars in damaging budget cuts. With the coalition, NYSUT PAC members and Executive VP Andy Pallotta will participate in a labor/community event to support the protesters of Occupy Albany from 6-7:30 p.m. today outside the State Capitol.

SED seeks proposals for new Performance Improvement Grant Program

SED has released an RFP for the new School District Performance Improvement Grant Program, which was enacted in the 2011-12 State Budget. Here's a [detailed memo](#) from NYSUT Research. The full RFP is available from the SED website at: www.p12.nysed.gov/funding/2012-15perfimp/home.html

Plan ahead for flexible spending plan changes

During open enrollment for 2012, NYSUT members with Section 125 flexible spending accounts may wish to contribute more than usual for high-cost health expenditures such as orthodontics. Beginning in 2013, the Affordable Care Act will limit contributions to a flex plan to \$2,500 per year for health care services with cost of limit adjustments in subsequent

years. There are no health care federal contribution limits in 2012. Flex plan contributions for dependent care and premium payments are not affected.

Members are encouraged to accurately estimate their costs since flex plan unused balances do not roll over to the next calendar year. NYSUT local leaders should check your collective bargaining agreement for any annual limits and contact their labor relations specialist if they have any questions. For further information and updates, visit <http://healthreform.kff.org/Timeline.aspx>. This website from the Kaiser Family Foundation includes the flex plan change as well as a timeline of other changes to be implemented in compliance with the Affordable Care Act. It is updated regularly.

Sign and circulate this AFT petition to support school modernization and jobs

Using [We the People](#), a feature on the [WhiteHouse.gov](#) website, the AFT has created a petition calling on the administration to repair and modernize America's public schools and community colleges. You can [sign the petition right here](#).

The repair and modernization of public schools was a large part of the American Jobs Act, but Republicans in Congress are blocking this bipartisan proposal, putting party lines before schoolchildren and the desperate need to create jobs.

This proposal would be the third portion of the blocked AJA sent to the Senate. Today (Thursday) GOP senators blocked the second component that had been pared off AJA. It would have created jobs for transportation infrastructure and created a national infrastructure bank. The first portion of the jobs act to fail was to provide funding to prevent layoffs and hire teachers, firefighters and police officers.

The We the People web tool allows Americans to develop, sign and share petitions calling on the Obama administration to take action on a range of issues. If the new AFT petition receives 25,000 signatures by Nov. 30, the White House will review it and respond. It's easy. [Go to the petition](#), create an account if you don't already have one, and sign. Please share this with your membership.

