

The Pipeline

Volume 2, Issue 3

April 2008

Don't forget to check out our website at www.otaonline.org for contacts, contract information, and more!

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The President's Corner

Hello All!

I hope this letter finds you having a good year with your students and that they survived (or are surviving) the grueling testing process. Don't you wish one of the first things our new President will do is tackle NCLB and make it a productive, informative procedure for both children and teachers!?!

The Ossining School District deserves congratulations for the receipt of the Cultural Arts Award from the Westchester Arts Council. Kudos to all of you!

I'd like to thank all of you for providing feedback towards helping the Negotiating Team develop proposals for our contract, which will expire on June 30, 2008. We have now had 2 meetings with the District. The first was to exchange proposals and the second began explanations of each. We are still in the very early stages and will have a better feel for things as discussions continue. Both sides agree that a fair and equitable settlement is the goal. We'll give periodic updates as time goes by.

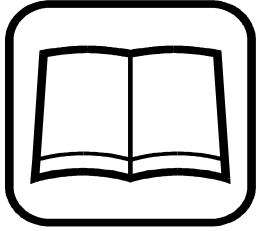
Also to be thanked are the Vote-Cope Building Representatives who came knocking on your doors to collect for this school year's campaign. Elda McQuade, our OTA District Coordinator, must also be congratulated and thanked. She has reported an outstanding drive with a collection total of close to \$10,000.00!!! This goes to our NYSUT Political Action Fund which helps union-backed candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor. Our local is also provided a rebate which can be used for political action activities. What a generous staff we have!

Last, but certainly not least, we have 13 teachers retiring from our midst this year. Together they have devoted HUNDREDS of years to our profession. Each is invited as our guest (with a guest of their own) to our OTA Retirement End-of-Year Party on Tuesday, June 3, 2008 at Crystal Bay. Please come and help them celebrate!

Enjoy the coming days of Spring!

Fondly,

Terry Bartok



Ossining Staff Development Center

We are offering a full complement of courses this spring. Please see our list below. For more information, please see our website, www.osdconline.org

Asian Infusion: China and Japan Through Literature, Food, and Holiday Traditions
Thursday May 1 and Tuesdays May 6, 13, 20, and 27 plus two Saturday field trips on May 3 and 10.

The Power of Poetry
Thursdays, May 8, 15, 22, 29 and June 5

Digital Storytelling, Part II
Thursdays, May 8, 15, 22, 29, and June 5

Differentiated Instruction, grades pre-K through 6
Saturdays, May 3 and 10

Differentiated Instruction, grades 7-12
Saturdays, May 3 and 10

Exploring the Hudson River II
Saturdays, May 17 and 31

Ossining: From Sing Sing to Croton Point
Saturdays, May 17 and 31

Childhood Depression and Other Disorders
Saturdays, June 7 and 14

Masks from Around the World
Saturdays, June 7 and 14

“Just think of the tragedy of teaching children not to doubt.”

-Clarence Darrow

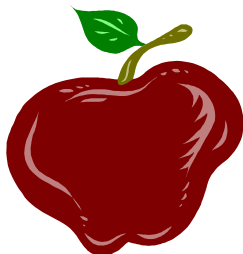
Summer Technology Week is coming!! Save the dates: June 27, 30, and July 1, and 2. Courses will be offered from 8-4. Check our website for info on Tech Week and Summer course offerings.

New York State License Requirements

NYSED now has its data online through a program called TEACH. It is strongly recommended that all teachers set up a TEACH account to update the information NYSED has and to keep track of additional materials related to certification.

To set up an account, go to the website:

www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/selfreg.htm and follow the directions.



Once you have created an account, you can go to the site www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/ and access your information whenever you choose by clicking on “Login to TEACH”. Click on “Online services” then click on “Inquiry Links: Account Information” for a selection menu to update your address, apply for additional certifications, check test score results, and check on your certifications.

Remember, your certification is your responsibility!!

School News

Brookside- Marie Barrow, Lorraine Richardson, and Ivy Taylor had a very action packed vacation in Los Angeles over the Winter Recess. The highlight of their trip involved the words "Come on down!" While in Hollywood, the ladies visited the game show The Price is Right. Marie wore a t-shirt that stated "I'm the one" and the Drew Carey agreed. As a contestant on the show, Marie's high bid won her a shiny set of waterless pots valued at \$2,300 and a chance to win a brand new car. Way to go!

Congratulations to Alanna Honore and her family on the birth of their son, Jason Gabriel, born on February 22.

Congratulations to Chris Englehardt and his family on the birth of their son, Andrew Ward, born on March 6.

OHS- Dawn Bayer's Film and Literature class has made quite an impact on her students. Francisco Bello, OHS class of 1998, recently called Ms. Bayer to inform her that it was her class that inspired him to become a film maker. Mr. Bello was nominated for an Academy Award for his short documentary, "Salim Baba". Although he did not win, Francisco continues to work as a film editor, practicing the art that he came to appreciate through Dawn's class. Two current seniors, also students in OHS's Film and Literature class, were nominated for awards by the Westchester County Film Festival. Kevin Christie and Louis Crisci were nominated for their short film, "The Red Rose". We congratulate the nominees and Dawn Bayer for their hard work and dedication.

Congratulations to Joanna Catechis on her marriage to Nikolas Anemodouras this summer.

Best wishes to Charise King on her recent engagement.

Best of luck to Dr. Naomi Zuckerman on her engagement to Seth Cohen.

Congratulations to Dr. Christina Occhiogrossi and John Fink on their recent engagement.

New Professional Growth Plan

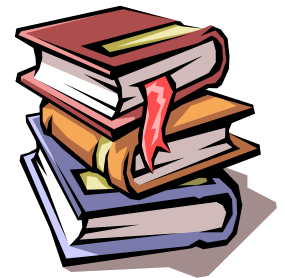
The Ossining Teachers Association recommended several members to work in partnership with the District to revise our Professional Growth Plan. The new plan, which should be put into effect for the 2008-2009 school year, has a few significant changes. Most notably, the Option I observation is no longer a scripted summary of the classroom observation. Rather, it has become more objective, with a basic rubric allowing teachers to understand what standards they will be measured against. The Plan allows teachers to truly reflect on their practices and to recognize the things that we do in the classroom that help all of our students learn.

Options II and III remain basically the same, with only minor adjustments that will insure the Plan is being used consistently throughout the district. Timelines have been added so that teachers will get their evaluations back in a timely manner, enabling them to put their projects into action.

New staff will be trained on the Plan during the New Teacher Orientation. Tenured teachers will learn the details of the Plan at faculty meetings. Look for presentations made to the individual schools and to the Board of Education in the coming months.



"Truth persuades by teaching but does not teach by persuading"
- *Tertullianus*



Know Your Contract

“Doubling Up” of Classes

Article VI. C. 6. states:

A teacher shall not be directed to handle a double class except in an emergency. If such emergency arises, the duty of handling a double class shall be distributed among teachers as equitably as possible, without regard to departmental lines.

The building representative of the Association shall be provided with a list of such assignments monthly as to doubling up and coverage. However, nothing in the clause shall prevent doubling where this is arranged by agreement between the building principal and teachers to provide teachers with the 15 minute relief period referred to [elsewhere in the contract].

a. The following system will be used to cover classes when teachers are absent from school:

i. The administration will make every effort to secure a qualified substitute teacher for teachers who are absent.

ii. If an insufficient number of qualified teachers are available on a particular day, the Administration will choose teachers from a list of volunteers who have indicated their willingness to give up their guaranteed preparation period in order to cover classes of teachers who are absent.

iii. If an insufficient number of volunteer teachers are available on a particular day, the Administration will assign teachers from their guaranteed preparation period in order to cover classes of those teachers who are absent.

iv. Teachers who have volunteered or who have been assigned to cover classes of teachers who are absent, will be reimbursed by the Board of Education at the rate of [\$35] per class coverage.

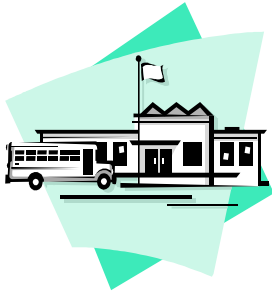
“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

-Henry Adams

OTA Book Drive

The Local Action Project committee of the Ossining Teachers Association is pleased to announce that as a result of its recent book drive, over 600 children’s books and blank DVDs have been sent to soldiers, sailors, and marines stationed at a hospital unit in Baghdad. That represents over 300 pounds of children’s literature, thanks to generous donations from members of the community and the OTA. These books were collected as part of a drive to unite families of deployed service men and women through literature, through the United Through Reading Military Program (www.read2kids.org). Participating moms and dads will be able to record themselves reading the books and have the recording, and sometimes the book itself, shipped to their little ones at home for repeated viewing. In a perfect circle of communication, a DVD of the child’s response can then be forwarded to the deployed parent for him or her to share in the delight of his or her child. A second shipment of books and DVDs is being prepared. These will be shipped to a unit from the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, NY. The OTA is grateful to all of the generous contributors who helped to support this effort on behalf of American service personnel overseas.

Contributions of gently used and new books appropriate for all ages up to age 16, blank mini DVDs, mailers, and money are still being accepted. Please call Marybeth Griffin at AMD Middle School, 914-762-5740, extension 315, for more information.



Local Action Plan

As you know, the 2007-2008 school year marks the first year of the OTA's participation in the NYSUT Local Action Project (LAP). Over the three year commitment term, the LAP members will be working together with NYSUT and the OTA to help revitalize our local and allow the OTA to increase its ability to make a difference – to our membership, to the District, and to the children and community of Ossining.



So far, the OTA/LAP team has achieved the following objectives:

- Development of an OTA logo to establish “branding”...the instant recognition of an organization or company. This logo can be used in a variety of ways to help residents recognize the OTA's participation in activities that benefit the community.
- Distribution of T-shirts with our new logo to every member.
- Creation of a slogan: *Shaping Ossining's Future*.
- Welcome to Ossining gift bags distributed by OTA to our newest teacher members during orientation week.
- Vital and active participation in the Ossining Matters Walk/Run in September, donation of a beautiful “Dressed to Grill” basket for the recent Ossining Matters gala auction, and a full page ad in the concert program.
- Union representation training for faculty council members at NYSUT's impressive new offices.
- The annual Food Drive for the Ossining Pantry (thanks to organizers Leslee Hammer & Haeryun Ha from Claremont!)
- Participation in the annual Breast Cancer Walk.
- The OTA book drive to support our overseas military personnel. (Donations of gently used children's books and DVD's are still welcome! Call Marybeth Griffin at AMD!)

So what's next? Look for information about the following initiatives and projects:

- An OTA store is being organized. Hats, polo shirts, maybe even ties featuring our new logo will be available for sale soon. All purchases will be used to fund future OTA endeavors. Wear your local's logo with pride!
- Participation in the upcoming Relay for Life to benefit the American Cancer Society.
- Participation in the Rotary Club's Great American Duck Race.
- Active participation in the Memorial Day Parade and the Ossining Fair.
- Political Action: phone bank to support the budget vote. A candidate questionnaire...you will be contacted and offered a chance to ask the questions that you want answered.
- Create a confidential, personal contacts data base to allow non-school communication between OTA members and the OTA executive board.
- A survey of members: what matters to you, and how do you see your role in the OTA.
- Freebies! Small, giveaway items (such as the pens already distributed) that will be made available at all events to help make the OTA logo become familiar and friendly.

And more! If you have an idea that you think would support the OTA's commitment to serve the Ossining community or build relationships among the OTA members, please contact our union president, Terry Bartok (Park), or any member of the LAP team: Sarah Arbitrio (AMD), Laurie West (AMD), Barbara Rink (Park), Marybeth Griffin (AMD), Ron Whitehead (Claremont), or Valerie Weinstein (AMD). Ideas are always welcomed!

“We learn by
teaching”
-James Howell



Mandatory Reporting

Abused and neglected children may be found in any classroom in any school in any community. School personnel are in a unique position to observe children daily over periods of time and may be aware that something is not right with a child long before anyone else notices. Local leaders and members are often faced with questions and problems regarding who must report suspected child abuse to whom and under what circumstances.

NYSUT has an Information Bulletin that provides the legal requirements for school employees and includes changes to New York State Social Services Law as amended by Chapter 193 of the Laws of 2007, effective October 2007. Chapter 193 defines the term school official, requires mandated reporters to directly report instances of suspected child abuse to the Central Register and inform the person in charge of the school, prohibits a school from retaliation against an employee for making a referral and from imposing any conditions, including approval or prior notification, upon an employee specifically required by social services law to make direct reports.

There are two ways school employees may be involved in child abuse reporting.

1. They have a reasonable cause to suspect a child is the victim of abuse or maltreatment by someone in parental relation to the child. (Covered by Social Services Law)
2. They witness or receive allegations of child abuse by an employee or volunteer in an educational setting. (Covered by Education Law)

NYSUT has an informational bulletin that our members can download that offers information on the Social Services Laws, Educational Laws, resources, advice, and reporting forms. The bulletin can be viewed at http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xml/bulletins_6737.htm.

Tenure Requirements

Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007, added a new Section 3012-b to Education Law requiring the Board of Regents to develop rules establishing minimum standards and procedures for tenure determinations for teachers employed in school districts and BOCES. The tenure determination process must include:

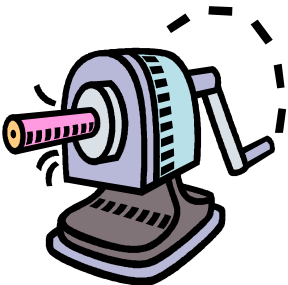
- An evaluation of the extent to which the teacher successfully utilized analysis of available student performance data and other relevant information when providing instruction;
- Peer review by other teachers, as far as practicable; and
- An assessment by the teacher's building administrator.

These changes apply to probationary classroom teachers providing instructional services. While other employees of the district and BOCES may be subject to tenure rules, and annual performance evaluations, such as teaching assistants or individuals providing pupil personnel services, school districts are not required to evaluate these individuals in accordance with the requirements of Section 3012-b of Education Law. The annual professional performance review (APPR) plan, however, requires that school districts must include criteria for the annual evaluation of individuals providing pupil personnel services and teaching assistants.

The change will take effect for tenure determinations made on or after July 1, 2008. This means teachers currently in the system would be affected by this change. (Please note that the New York State Education Department and NYSUT are seeking a chapter amendment which would clarify that these changes would apply to those teachers hired on or after July 1, 2008.)



“Education is the transmission of civilization.”
-Will Durant



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Association

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ONE TOGETHER ALWAYS!