

# The Member Ship



The Newsletter of The West Genesee Teachers' Association

## YOU CAN'T PUT STUDENTS FIRST, IF YOU PUT TEACHERS LAST

The Board of Regents is currently taking the input of teachers, parents and administrators in an attempt to develop yet another evaluation system for educators. Our legislators have just damaged the educational experience for the children of NYS. The legislators either do not understand, or care what the recent changes and the negative impact, has done to teachers and students. The responsibility of creating the new APPR system is in the hands of the Regents.



Unlike the original, flawed APPR system, the new system was signed into law without any negotiations. The NYS Budget Bill that was passed in the early hours of April 1<sup>st</sup> had no input from teachers or NYSUT. One of the few bright lights over the past few years has been the deafening voices of the parents. They have spoken loud and clear by saying, we trust our teachers, let them control the testing and provide them with a meaningful evaluation system. The hope is that the legislators, the Board of Regents and NYSED stop the nonsense and take the emphasis off of testing. We are hopeful that common sense will prevail and many of the new changes are reversed or rolled back. The changes are listed in the order that I believe will have the greatest impact on the most people. As bad as APPR currently is, at least it was negotiated. I don't believe many of the legislators even know what they agreed to when approving this system.

### 1. APPR

A new "matrix" will be used that has two components, **teacher performance** and **student performance**. The **student performance** is based on state tests for 3-8 teachers and teachers of Regents Exam courses. Non-state test teachers will develop Student Learning Objectives similar to what the current practice is but developed by the state. An option exists for an additional assessment to be used beyond the state test. If you consider this having any voice at all, this is

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### *Important Dates:*

**Thursday, May 21, 4pm,**  
**HS auditorium:** General Membership meeting/Presentation of the Candidates

**Tuesday, June 2nd, In Buildings:**  
WGTA Election

### *Congratulations to the 2015 retirees!*

Laurel Digit - SR  
Sue Gianinni - SR  
Diane Lowery - WGM  
Karen Mercado - HS  
Karen West - ST



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basically the only area where collective bargaining still exists. **Teacher** performance is based on two mandatory observations including one by an “independent” evaluator. An additional observation by an impartial peer can also be requested. The two scores meet in the matrix where the teacher receives a rating of H, E, D or I. If a teacher receives an ineffective score for student performance, they cannot receive an overall rating of E or H.

## **2. DUE PROCESS**

A tenured teacher that receives two consecutive ineffective ratings will be deemed incompetent and removal from their position **may** begin after 90 days.

A tenured teacher with three consecutive ineffective ratings **will** face a 3020a hearing for removal from their position. School Boards are mandated to follow this procedure.

The burden of proof is now placed on the teacher to prove their competence.

## **3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers with a professional certificate must complete 100 hours of rigorous, state approved professional development every five years. On the website, *EngageNY*, it states that **all** teachers must meet this obligation. All current indications are that teachers with permanent certification will simply have to re-register through the TEACH website every five years or if they change addresses.

## **4. TENURE**

Tenure is awarded after 4 years only if teachers receive effective or highly effective ratings in 3 of the 4 years. A teacher cannot be granted tenure if they receive an ineffective rating in their fourth year. An additional year may be granted for a probationary teacher to receive tenure. Teachers who have already received tenure in another district will have 3 years as a probationary teacher in their new district. Tenure cannot be granted if the teacher is rated as ineffective in their final year. The new tenure rules take place for anyone hired after July 1, 2015.

## **5. RECEIVERSHIP**

The bottom 5% of schools in the state fall under the heading of “failing” and will have two years under an approved intervention model. At the end of that two year term NYSED will determine whether or not the school should be placed under state control. The state can then decide upon an organization or individual to turn the schools over to.

## **6. AGREEMENT**

APPR agreements must be reached on acceptance of the new law by November 15 for districts to receive their increase in state aid. However, there is little to agree to other than accepting that the state education department now has ultimate control.

More light is being shined on public education in New York State than ever before. Hopefully the pendulum will swing back towards trusting and empowering teachers but currently there is a great deal of finger pointing and placing blame on those that have handled these changes with grace. **YOU CAN'T PUT STUDENTS FIRST, IF YOU PUT TEACHERS LAST.**

**A 9-POINT PLAN TO RECLAIM THE JOY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**  
#ReclaimTheJoy

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1. Don't hold school aid hostage. Decouple school aid from the November 2015 deadline for APPR.
2. Retain local control and reject unfunded mandates. Repeal mandatory outside evaluators.
3. Student learning is more than a test score and we need an evaluation system that recognizes that fact. Decouple test scores from APPR. The federal government is moving in that direction and New York state should do the same. The tests coming from SED have been a debacle. No bubble test can measure a child's curiosity. Use multiple measures to evaluate learning. Allow for achievement criteria (instead of only growth scores) in optional student assessment subcomponents (NYSUT's APPR Task Force legislation).
4. If we're serious about every child's future, let's get serious about doing what works. Support community schools legislation (Peoples-Stokes A.6791).
5. Support local decision-making in the hiring, tenure and disciplining of teachers. Repeal automatic or mandatory 3020a charges based upon unreliable ratings.
6. Allow struggling schools the time they need to succeed. Amend the receivership provision to give schools a true year or more to turn around and show improvement.
7. Reform the tax cap to allow for common sense exemptions or adjustments for things like enrollment growth.
8. Support and codify parents' right to opt out of developmentally inappropriate tests (Nolan A.6777).
9. Enact and implement TRUE charter school accountability.

## **Notes from the Vice President**

*By Mary Weaver, mweave66@gmail.com*

I want to take a moment to thank you all for everything that you have accomplished this year as teachers at West Genesee. I have been a member of the Teaching Center for 2 years now and the last event at the high school was a success.

Many teachers that presented will be presenting at the Leadership Conference at Drumlins. It is always a pleasure to see county-wide presenters including our own teachers present as leaders in their field. The participation of our teachers and the West Genesee Teaching Center in county-wide leadership workshops and other professional development has always been great for our members and will continue to be for years to come.

I know there have been issues with certain items for the Superintendents Liaison Committees. I hope in the larger scheme of things, actions have been taken to gain the attention of the Superintendent. The committee has offered suggestions on how to change things for the better in our district. It is also apparent that we still have to add items that continue to be problematic for our members in their individual classes. It is also hoped that we continue to have dialog and be honest with the superintendent as to what is important and to what is essential in moving forward for the good of the education of our students.

I am asking you to be as honest and straightforward as possible. I realize there have been glitches and reactions to issues that may have not been the best, but this is a great avenue to start conversation with the superintendent. I will be asking for honest answers and continue to help with broader district issues. Please forward me any issues that are not settled in your principal's liason meetings for this school year and next.

## Contact Your WGTA Executive Officers

<http://www.wgta.net>

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School: 315-487-4601

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Email: [jstablesster@gmail.com](mailto:jstablesster@gmail.com)

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Keith Newvine, Vice President for Grievances

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## Dinner on the WGTA RSVP Today!



Where: Coleman's Authentic Irish Pub

When: June 24, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Who: ***Open to the first 100*** WGTA members and their significant others who respond to [mannionforwgta@gmail.com](mailto:mannionforwgta@gmail.com)

Why: Somebody needs to buy you a dinner.

Hidden Agenda: We are looking for people to consider joining EDC, SLC, Insurance and Retiree Committees to help make our

WGTA stronger than ever.



## Spotlight On...Sue Giannini

By Kelly Chambala, Assistant Editor

Each day, Sue Giannini smiles on her way to work as a 5th grade teacher at Split Rock Elementary. That's after 32 years of teaching, 21 of those being West Genesee years. Her smile stays with her throughout the day, as she interacts with her students, and coworkers, gracefully navigating the world of education today.

This June, Giannini will hang her teaching hat and retire, a decision that is still surprising many, including a 4th grader hopeful she would teach him in 2016.

"I still love what I do," Giannini said. "I like the cyclic nature of the profession. Starting fresh each year. My teammates and building colleagues are the absolute best to work with each day."

Giannini has many memories of her years teaching including the time when a rocket kit from BOCES was wired incorrectly, and while preparing for her lesson afterschool, the rockets launched in the classroom. "We crawled out of the classroom laughing hysterically. There was a burnmark on the floor."

During her tenure at West Genesee, Giannini was involved in the WGTA as a building alternate, a building president and leader, and finally WGTA vice-president. Giannini said she enjoyed representing the membership, helping colleagues resolve individual matters and working to prevent loss of staff positions. The experience, Giannini said, was very rewarding.

As for advice to those just entering the profession, Giannini says nothing but experience can truly prepare you for the career. "Each day brings different rewards and different challenges. You have to bring your A-game daily." She acknowledges there are pressures on educators today that didn't exist when she began her career. "Don't let the outside forces cause you to leave a profession you love. I am leaving because it is my time. WG has been my home away from home for 21 years. You will want to go all in, it's worth it!"

Giannini has no immediate plans for her retirement, but will likely spend time travelling with her husband of 40 years, and visiting her sons Eric, an assistant professor at University of Alabama, and Adam an engineer in Saratoga.

## WGTA Members Care for all Corners of Our Earth

On a sunny Saturday, April 25th, a group of WGTA teachers and their family members stepped out of their classroom and onto the shoulder of Rte. 695 in honor of the 45th anniversary of Earth Day. Dedicated individuals walked the roadside of our stretch of highway and made our corner of Camillus a little nicer. It reminded all of those involved how lucky we are to live on this planet.....and make it through winter.





# Benefits that matter to you!

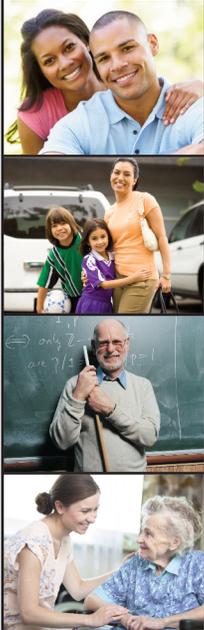
Membership in NYSUT allows you to enjoy the benefits of the more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits.

These endorsed programs include crucial products that the majority of NYSUT members already purchase:

- Homeowners Insurance
- Auto Insurance
- Legal & Financial Services
- Life Insurance
- Shopping & Travel Programs

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.

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.



For more than 30 years, the NYSUT Education & Learning Trust has been offering professional development programs created with the NYSUT member in mind -- providing an extensive online inventory with studies to fit your busy schedule.

The Education & Learning Trust offers online, VESi or in-classroom courses for graduate, undergraduate and in-service credit. Professional development training is available for public education issues such as:

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- Student Achievement
- Achievement Gaps
- Teacher Retention
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- Cultural Diversity
- Classroom Management
- And Much More

To learn more about ELT programs available and/or register online, visit [nysut.org/inspire](http://nysut.org/inspire) or call 800-528-6208.



What a two years it has been! Here are a few things the WGTA has accomplished:

- Passing of an amendment to the bylaws which clarifies the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses
- Passing of an amendment to the bylaws which clarifies voting procedures and validation of the results of an election of WGTA Executive Officers
- Negotiation of favorable HEDI scoring bands for the Multiple Measures (60 pts.) of APPR
- Creation of Facebook Page - - West Genesee Teachers' Association
- Running multiple sick banks
- Creation of Twitter Account -- #wildcatteachers
- Re-establishment of *The MemberShip* – Newsletter
- WGTA receives tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service
- Re-established the Fall Fling
- Re-established the Adopt-a-highway cleanup
- Increase in WGTA email list from approximately 120 to over 300 participants
- WGTA T-Shirts
- Filing of annual required audits with AFT and NYSUT
- Attendance at the NYSUT CNY Leadership Conference
- Established a relationship with PAYCHEX for payment of stipends and removal of payroll taxes
- Use of Accounting Firm Grossman St. Amour to conduct a thorough external audit
- Letter sent to Governor Cuomo signed by the WGTA, all members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent denouncing the decreases in state funding to school districts and the emphasis on testing
- Attendance at the Representative Assembly – Resolution Committee Meetings
- Member of the Onondaga County Teachers' Association
- Meetings with Senator John DeFrancisco, Assemblyman Gary Finch and Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli
- Invitation to attend West Genesee High School accepted by Assemblyman Finch
- Re-established Superintendent's Liaison Committee
- Surveys given to members used to decide 2014-2015 calendar
- Survey given to members to decide how to conduct Local Achievement Target for 2014 – 2015
- Attendance at City Hall Education Forum with Senators Flanagan and DeFrancisco
- Carol M. Baldwin Foundation Donation Drive
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Donation Drive
- Smart Phone Friendly Refurbished Website

# The Back Page

Your guide to services, deals, and promotions for the WG education community

We want to advertise for you!

Are you an artist, a carpenter, a house painter looking to advertise your services?

Advertisements in *The Member Ship* are provided free to West Genesee Teachers' Association Members and their family. Please send your advertisement to Kelly Chambala (SR) at [kchambala@gmail.com](mailto:kchambala@gmail.com). The only other advertisements that are run in *The Member Ship* are those provided by NYSUT, AFT, or the AFL-CIO.

## MJS Home Improvement L.L.C.

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## WGTA Email Directory



Join the FREE WGTA Email Directory. There are currently around 200 WGTA members, retirees, WG Staff and WG parents in the Directory. We share our Email addresses and send each other educational articles, WGTA and union information and personal notes.

If you would like to be a part of this FREE Directory, please send your name, Email address and WG status (school name / retired / WG staff, etc.) to Lynn Davis at: [DavisRetired@gmail.com](mailto:DavisRetired@gmail.com).

Email address are only shared with other members of the Directory.



**Congratulations to the West Genesee teachers honored as Teachers of Excellence. Check out the story: [http://www.localsyr.com/story/d/story/teachers-of-excellence-awards-honors-more-than-30/17432/6cBtqIVAwke100\\_m78FbEQ](http://www.localsyr.com/story/d/story/teachers-of-excellence-awards-honors-more-than-30/17432/6cBtqIVAwke100_m78FbEQ)**