

THE MEMBER SHIP



The Newsletter of The West Genesee Teachers' Association, <http://www.wgta.net>

WGTA Seeks Individuals Interested in Running for Board of Education



The WGTA wants you! Unfortunately, because you are a valued West Genesee employee, you're not eligible to run for the Board of Education. Of the nine Board of Education seats, four of the positions will be up for election in May of 2018. The WGTA is recruiting, interviewing, and endorsing individuals that are interested in running for the Board of Education. Running for an elected office can be a bit intimidating. We are here to help and guide interested candidates through the process, making it as painless as possible. Getting on the ballot is as simple as completing a short form and obtaining about 30-

40 signatures. Many of our teachers live in the district and have children or grandchildren who attend West Genesee Schools. We all have a stake in the education of our children, some of us as both teacher and parent. If you know someone who lives in the district that is knowledgeable, professional, and most importantly passionate about the education in this community, please have that person email me at mannonforwgta@gmail.com. Organizations prosper most when there is a triangular set of checks and balances in place. At West Genesee, this triangle includes District Administration, the Board of Education, and educators that work in the district. We as teachers have a great deal of perspective and information that we can provide to the Board of Education members when making critical decisions. We will continue to encourage board members that influence the direction of this district to maintain open communication with West Genesee educators, especially when deliberating and determining board actions. We appreciate the current members that dedicate their time and energy to ensure a sustainable future for the children of this district.

This year we will extend an invitation to all candidates to meet directly with some of our teachers.

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These meetings will include both current members of the Board of Education and new candidates. To the current members, we will not only show our appreciation for their service, but also give them some direct insight on how policy or program changes can impact the classroom. Part of our responsibility as an organization is to help ensure that concerns of our teachers reach the board members. Beyond meeting with our current board members, we know that engaging in conversations with new candidates can bring a fresh set of ideas and philosophies that are necessary considering the ongoing changes and challenges in education. If this is you or you know someone who is willing to represent the West Genesee community, please consider running for the Board of Education. Your community needs you!



Contact Your WGTA Executive Officers

<http://www.wgta.net>

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Hardware and Hard-feelings: Protecting Your Identity at Home & at School

Keith Newwine, VP for Grievances

The recent hack of consumer credit reporting agency Equifax should have enlightened us, if we weren't already aware, that our personal identifying information and privacy is always at risk. A few weeks ago at a high school faculty meeting, I mentioned to my colleagues that we should never use our personal computing device at school nor should we use our school computer at our home. The response was disconcerting to say the least, and I became painfully aware of just how much we teachers do that might actually put our Internet-profile at risk.

The District is continually requiring teachers to become more and more dependent on technology in order to be an effective teacher--for better or worse. Teachers have always brought their work home with them, and that now might even require bringing the school's computer home to do work online (i.e Google Classroom). Moreover, in order to be expedient and efficient, many teachers bring their personal computing device (e.g. laptop, smartphone, iPad, etc.) to school in order to do work at one work-station while the school computer is being used at another location.

While we feel confident that the District is not actively scouring the IP addresses of its staff, it is a fact that the use of personal computing device at school and school computers at home grants the District access to any and all information at those specific IP addresses and locations.

I recently talked to Adam Zehr, Information Technology Director of Lewis County and former Director of Technology for Indian River School District (and my brother-in-law), and asked him two simple questions:

1. Is it true that if I bring my personal computer to school and use the school's WiFi, the school now has access to all the information at that IP address?
2. Is it true that if I bring my school computer home and use my personal WiFi, the school now has access to all information at the location?

His simple answer: "Yes, theoretically to both."

I then asked Mr. Zehr to elaborate, and he explained:

In the two examples you give, you intermingle personal and work environments. No different if you took your briefcase home and accidentally mixed your personal paperwork (i.e. bank statements, social security card, etc.) with your professional paperwork (i.e. gradebook, student handouts, etc.) Then, when you got to school, that personal paperwork and information is now accessible to anyone who can open your briefcase. The same exact concept applies here. Same concept, just a different medium.

In the event that West Genesee Central School District ever got hacked, and Equifax tells that it is certainly possible for any organization to be susceptible to these types of vulnerabilities, any information that is on your personal computing device that you brought to school or any information that is on your personal Internet connection that you connected your school computer to is now fair game for Internet ne'er do wells.

I know this might sound jarring and raise concern. I also know that this article might be seen as a clandestine way of protecting the potential inappropriate behavior of our members. Please know that this is not the case. In the event that any member violates our collective bargaining agreement or any state or federal law, the WGTA and WGCSD will continue work together to protect the rights of our students and our members with total transparency and due diligence.

(cont. on page 4)

As technology hardware blurs the borders between our personal and professional lives, we must learn how we too can protect ourselves from the potential hazards of our (sometimes) co-dependent relationship with all things technological.

Lastly, specific options to remedy this concern are being addressed with the District as we speak. We will discuss the District's position and provide potential solutions at the next Superintendent's Liaison Committee meeting this month. Stay tuned. If you just can't wait that long, go to these sites to learn more about Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzNA-flOyMQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCGsZBNr5Jw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SstavM0r9A>

A final note from Mr. Adam Zehr about VDI:

I use VMWare for all of our server virtualization at the County. I run 20 plus servers on one large appliance consisting of 3 pieces of hardware. Desktop operating systems can run the same way and be delivered to end users. New York State is incorporating this model for all of the DSS Departments and we are participating in a pilot with them now. Works very well.



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Unions Under Attack

~ Mary Gotham, Treasurer

(excerpts from "Hot Topics: Unions Under Attack" workshop given by Susan DeCarlo, NYSUT Fall Conference Oct, 2017)

Before Unions... employees had little or no choice, little or no voice.

Before there were Unions, public sector workers were not assured:

- Safe working conditions
- Minimum wage
- Job security
- Limits on work load
- Limits on work hours
- Overtime pay
- Sick pay
- Health insurance
- Retirement pensions
- Age requirements (child labor, age discrimination)
- Equal employment opportunities
- Disability protections
- Compensation if hurt on the job
- Seniority rights
- Collective bargaining
- Grievance procedures
- Due process

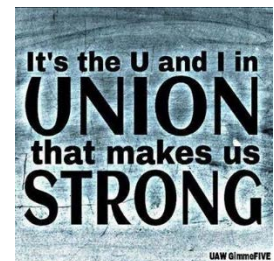
Before New York Teachers Unionized:

- 1953: \$50/week salary ~ approx 25% of what Unionized garment workers were paid
- No paid sick time
- No job security
- Many teachers were forced to work as full-time subs without:
 - Benefits
 - Health insurance
 - Job security
 - Seniority rights
 - Collective bargaining
 - Grievance procedures
 - Due process...
- No prep periods
- 40+ students per class
- Pregnant teachers forced to resign

Unions are under attack. Education is under attack. Teachers are under attack, look at Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey... New York is NOT immune. New York is large. New York is Union strong. New York is a prime target.

What can I do? Member Voices = Union Strength

Your union is your voice. Be vigilant. Be informed. Be involved. VOTE! Know the issues. Inform your colleagues, family, friends. Get to know your elected representatives. Contact your representatives prior to important legislation.



Sources:

DeCarlo, Susan. *Hot Topics: Unions Under Attack*. NYSUT Fall Conference. Otesaga, Cooperstown. Oct. 2017. Workshop.

Martinez, Dave. *Union Make Us Strong*. Conferring on Perceptions of Public Unions, Contracts. 1 Sept. 2014. Girard at Large. Manchester. 7 Nov 2017. <http://www.girardatlarge.com/2014/09/conferring-on-perceptions-of-public-union-contracts>.

Unions Under Attack @unityfor556 Jan 31. Union Busting Conservatives, Going Local. 7 Nov 2017. <http://ow.ly/EMqF308vJfQ>

Excellus Update



On November 1, 2017, many Excellus health insurance policyholders received a letter notifying them of a decrease in coverage to occur on January 1, 2018. Excellus currently covers 100% of a claim at a Non-Participating Excellus Facility, that coverage would be reduced to 80%. This action was not taken by the West Genesee Central School District or the Central New York Health Insurance Cooperative. The Central New York Health Insurance Cooperative consists of a large group of school districts that includes West Genesee, Jamesville-DeWitt, Solway, and other outlying districts. Participation in this cooperative or “The Consortium”, as it is sometimes called, provides us with very good coverage at a competitive price. This decision was made by Excellus in an attempt to leverage non-participating facilities into becoming participating facilities. Unfortunately, this move to expand their markets will impact our members. Our contract is not with Excellus; it is with the district. The district assumes no additional cost, but claims being paid at only 80% helps Excellus’ bottom line and comes out of the pockets of their policyholders. Excellus has the right to make such a change, however; it impacts dozens of collective bargaining agreements between districts and their staff.

The WGTA has been in conversations with the district, encouraging them, along with other district leaders from around the area, to apply pressure directly on Excellus and/or the cooperative to reverse this decision. We have a contract with the district and by no fault of theirs, the terms and conditions of that contract have not only been violated, they have been changed. We are hoping for an amicable solution to this situation. Our premiums are set and agreed upon based on the benefits in our health insurance policy. The anticipated action will decrease our benefits with no decrease in the rate of the premium. The following outlines some information about our relationship with Excellus:

- In 2016, Excellus policyholders from West Genesee amassed approximately \$13 million in claims.
- Of the claims filed in 2016, 1.5% of the claims were tied to non-participating providers.
- Excellus and districts may consider this a low number of claims, but it is a considerable amount and impactful.
- This constitutes approximately \$200,000 of the total cost of claims.
- If members must now pay 20% for the services provided, approximately \$40,000 has come out of our members pocket and into Excellus' hands.
- This impacted all 30 or so districts in the CNY Health Cooperative.
- My estimates show that collectively this amounts to a \$1,000,000+ savings to Excellus.

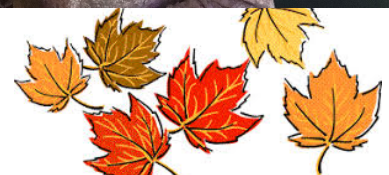
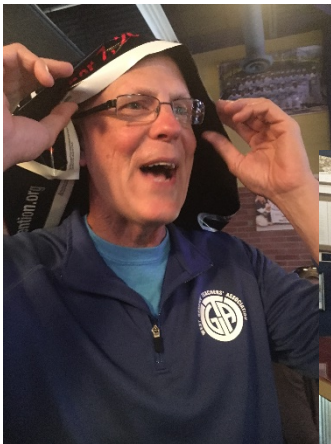
With given the history of our relationship with Excellus, our primary concern and question as we move forward towards a mutual and respectful relationship with Excellus is "What will be the next decrease in benefit with no change in premiums"?

The following link allows you to search for Excellus providers and facilities <https://provider.bcbs.com/> .

Local education unions around the area are having the same conversations with their district leaders about this reduction. Additionally, they will take similar actions, such as filing grievances, against their district, as they have no other recourse to take action against Excellus or the cooperative. Additionally, NYSUT and local leaders are communicating with those entities to reverse the anticipated change. The WGTA will provide you with continuous updates on this issue as they present themselves.



WGIA members know
how to have fun
together!
2017 Fall Fling



WGTA 2017 Halloween Happenings at

CMS, STONEHEDGE OR PUMPKIN DECORATING, EASTHILL, and UP at WGHS!



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As an additional benefit to NYSUT members and their families, your union membership allows you to participate in more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits.

These offerings include crucial products that you may already purchase such as life, auto & homeowners insurance, unbiased financial services and expert legal advice. But your NYSUT membership also allows you to participate in a variety of shopping, travel and personal programs that can help you save on everyday purchases and those special occasions.



Our endorsed shopping/travel/personal programs offer savings on numerous online purchases, including:

**Theme Park & Movie Tickets
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Car & Truck Rentals**

**Office Supply Discounts
Retail Store Discounts
Concerts & Sporting Events**

**Electronics Discounts
Ski Tickets
Car Buying Service**

Participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also gives you a trusted advocate ready to assist you with any issues or concerns with any of our programs.



Member Appreciation Month coming in February 2018!

As a show of thanks to the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that comprise this labor union, NYSUT Member Benefits will once again be holding our annual Member Appreciation Month celebration in February 2018.

Special prize drawings will be held each day of the month. To be eligible to win, you must be a member of our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

Sign up any time through the end of February 2018 to be eligible to win... but if you join MAP by January 31, 2018, you'll have the most chances to win!

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit ***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.

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 Shana Michel (WGHS) at shanamccaffrey@gmail.com. The only other advertisements that are run in “The Member Ship” are those provided by NYSUT, AFT, or the AFL-CIO.

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