

MUSINGS

On this day, show our teachers appreciation

On the eve of National Teacher Day, May 6, let's start a conversation about the profession I love.

First, we need to avoid the phrase, "Those who can't, teach" because nothing is further from the truth.

My day is filled with interactions with students, lesson planning, grading, meetings, paperwork and actual teaching, which ranges from content delivery to group work facilitator to game show host.

As someone who wrote papers on a typewriter and used microfiche for research, I now use Google Classroom to reach my students in this age of technology and social media. I am certainly not the exception; teachers "can" and "do" all the time.

Second, let's get over the



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A basket of paper flowers can go a long way to express appreciation to a teacher.

preoccupation with teachers' salaries. When I am confronted by people with critical observations about teacher contracts, I have one suggestion. Pick the day, the subject, and the age of the kids and give teaching a try. After class is over and you've recovered, let's talk about how overcompensated teachers really are.

■ **MUSINGS:** The mission of Newsday's editorial page is to provide reasoned, informed opinions on Long Island issues. On Mondays, readers now have a forum, Musings, to present their prose on politics and policy in a thoughtful and thought-provoking way. Email letters@newsday.com as text; subject: Musings.

While the joys outnumber the shenanigans, teaching is a constant challenge. Teachers should not have to work extra jobs to make ends meet.

Finally, teachers need your support. We need more resources to teach your children, smaller class sizes, and less mandated testing for our students, especially our youngest.

Fewer people are inspired to join me in the classroom, and teachers are leaving my profession at an alarming rate. New York, for example, has seen much higher teacher turnover rates since the pandemic — 22% for teachers with less than five years of experience and 14% overall. So, schools will have to cancel courses, increase class sizes and teacher-student ratios, or hire under-prepared teachers.

All of these detrimental cuts will change how American children are taught. Data shows that teachers are the number one in-school influence on student learning and achievement. We need to support and respect that relationship.

As legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden — a onetime high school English teacher — explained, "I think the teaching profession contributes more to the future of our society than any other single profession."

Tomorrow, our local and national conversations should reflect the importance of education and the value added by teachers to our society.

— JEANNE KNUDSEN, RIDGE

The writer is a social studies teacher at Longwood High School in Middle Island.