



The Member Ship

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



Negotiations

NYSUT's annual conference was held just before the Thanksgiving holiday in Cooperstown, New York. One of the featured presentations was on negotiations. Although the negotiations of a new contract are not scheduled until 2020, it is not too early to think about the best practices for our negotiation process. In this post-

<https://whatsupyukon.com/events/Community%20Kitchen> 1/

Janus world, the presenters offered a “new” negotiations topic--The Importance of the Community. How is the community important in a negotiations process? Research states that developing school, family, and community partnerships improve school climate, provide services, and increase the connections between families and others in the school community.

On a daily basis, educators provide students not only academic knowledge, but also social-emotional support. With the changing socio-economic status of our community, many students look to school as a refuge. Most parents recognize and appreciate the efforts that educators make to this cause; however, is the greater Camillus community aware of the positive impact our efforts have on the future citizens of our town?

Getting back to the question, how does this relate to the negotiations process? The simple answer is that educators are employees of the people that support West Genesee. It is important for us to demonstrate, communicate, and share our work with the greater community, so they will continue to support us, as valued educators in their school system.

- Dawn Personte, Vice President

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Standing Together In a Year of Changes

Last year at this time, our union was working to encourage the protection of our pensions by getting out the “No” vote on the New York State constitutional convention. Through union leadership and the power of the voters in New York State, we won that battle. Soon after, we were faced with a devastating decision in the Janus vs AFSCME by the Supreme Court of the United States. This decision is just beginning to affect unions across the country.

As a result of the Janus vs AFSCME decision, public employees are now allowed to benefit from collective bargaining without paying their fair share to public employee unions. These employees are not members of the West Genesee Teachers’ Union or NYSUT, but will still get the benefit of our contract and representation through our union.

The Janus decision was the only reason why we went through a re-carding process last spring. As a union, we wanted to make sure we stayed together and secured the WGTA for years to come. Today, we have about 99% participation of West Genesee Teachers in the WGTA. The commitment that we have to each other and the teaching profession is also running strong through our sister associations in the area, with majority reporting the same percentages of teachers re-signing with their locals and NYSUT. Across the country the American Federation of Teachers is seeing a 2 percent increase in union membership since last year. This is a direct result of teacher frustrations with their educational institutions along with walkouts in other states.

Almost simultaneously with the Janus ruling, New York State instituted changes on how they would deal with the Janus decision. In New York State public employees can either opt in or opt out of public employee unions. Employees who opt out of participating in a union will not receive most of the union benefits. Non-union employees still benefit from collective bargaining, but representation for disciplinary issues and non-contractual situations will be extremely limited. Non-union employees will not have the strength and the resources of the union at their backs when dealing with their employer.



Fortunately, we live in a state that values the worker and protects their rights, even when the federal government tries to tear unions apart. Last year, during the state budget process, the governor and legislature enacted significant changes to the Taylor Laws that govern fair practices between employers and unions in New York State.

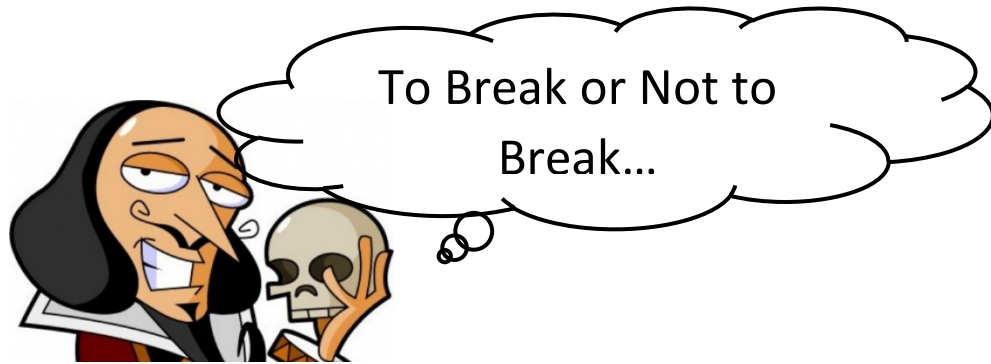
<http://www.stogether.org/>

Taylor Law Changes 2018

1. Unions do not have to represent non-union members.
2. Public employers must inform the union of new employees within 30 days of employment.
3. Public employers must provide significant time for union representatives to meet with new employees during the work day without a charge to leave time.
4. Public employee unions are permitted to use electronic membership cards.
5. Members returning from leave are considered members automatically on return from leave.

Union matters now more than ever. The fact that we have 99% of our teaching staff in the WGTA is a sign of how much you all value the association and NYSUT. Going it alone and stepping away from union membership can be a risky endeavor. The small amount that you pay to your union protects you, provides access to a plethora of benefits, and most importantly gives you a voice. Thank you for choosing to stand together with your union.

- Michael Perkins Vice President



Questions often arise around this time of year about the calendar. The main question that is bouncing around this year is, "Why do we have two weeks at holiday break?" The contract states that the tentative calendar will be presented to the WGTA which may make notations and suggestions, and then it is given to the Superintendent. A big problem with recent calendars including the one for the 2018-2019 school year is NYSED is not extending Regents Exams further into the final full week of June. This may give us a long, 11 week summer, but it provides little flexibility in creating a calendar.

In the past, the district has frequently used our recommendations in building the final, approved district calendar. Here are the rules we are playing by:

1. 186 total days
2. 183 instructional (student contact) days
3. 3 full professional development days, including an orientation day
4. 4 half days for professional development to help with district and state initiatives. These days also count as instructional, student contact days
5. Must have Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving off (our contract) Nov. 21
6. Must have Good Friday off (bus driver contract) April 19, part of April break
7. Once a BOCES calendar is built, the district then begins to develop our calendar

To meet all of the conditions above, the district and the WGTA narrowed down the calendar options to two:

- One option included two full weeks during the holiday break.
- The other option would have that break end earlier having students and staff return on Thursday the 2nd for a two day week. This would open up the calendar to allow for those two vacation days to be placed somewhere in the calendar, most likely having an extra day at April break and the Memorial Day weekend.

There was no way to eliminate the orientation day prior to Labor Day because there was not enough calendar days to fit in 186 total days due to the early end to Regents exam period. The consensus was that having a full two week break at holiday time would cause the least disruption to the learning process, provide for a maximum number of five day weeks, and mimic the calendars of majority of other surrounding districts. In regards to Professional Development, the 4 half days are currently November 6th, March 20th, and the other two days have been pushed together to form a full day of professional development days; therefore, we have 4 full days and 2 half days as oppose to 3 full days and 4 half days. This equates to the same amount of student contact and professional development time.

Other considerations that factor into decisions regarding the calendar is the ongoing problem of a lack of substitute teachers and coordinating with BOCES to ensure that our staff days coincide with workshops they are conducting. This results in avoiding Mondays and Fridays as Professional Development days. Additionally, every effort is made to maintain as many full, five day weeks as possible. Teachers have expressed that this should be a priority as it is less disruptive to the learning process.

If you have any suggestions for the future, please email a WGTA Representative!

Notes from NYSUT's Fall Conference



https://tnshrm.org/content.php?page=Legal_Updatesh

Presented by Robert Reilly, General Counsel

Robert discussed a few of the settled and pending Public & Higher Education cases. One worth noting was a recent case that involved a teacher who had called in sick. On that same day, she posted pictures while at the beach:

Social Media - When in doubt, don't! If you take a sick day DO NOT take pictures with your phone and post them on Face Book, Instagram or any social media site.

Photos are date stamped and can be tracked to location.

by Mary Gotham, Treasurer



THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS UPON US!
NEED SOME HELP WITH YOUR SHOPPING?

**PERSONAL LOAN RATES
AS LOW AS 6.99% APR*!**

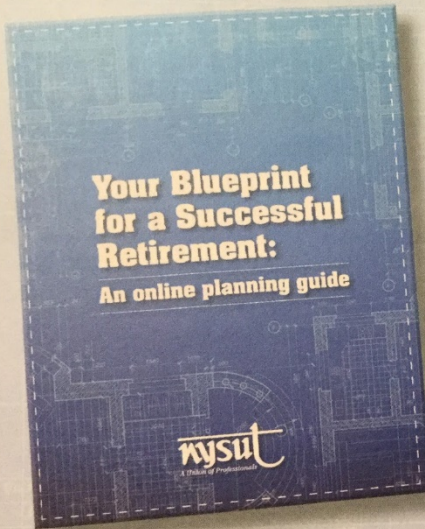


*APR: Annual Percentage Rate. Rates are determined by credit worthiness. Rates are subject to change without notice. Membership restrictions apply.



LIKE US ON 

Planning to Retire? - Presented by Paul Farfaglia.



Thinking about retiring?

The “*Your Blueprint for a Successful Retirement*” online planning guide will help you answer critical questions before you embark on your journey into retirement.

Helpful topics include:

- Your Union Connection in Retirement
- Pension
- NYSUT Member Benefits
- Social Security
- Estate Planning and Long-Term Care

Check out the online guide at www.nysut.org/retirementguide

Benefit Retirement Profile Sheets have been mailed out.

The new layout may be confusing. It is much shorter than prior years and some of the information is not easily found. NYSTRS encourages you to call with any questions, 1-800-782-0289. [NYSTRS website](http://www.nystrs.org) (www.nystrs.org) has a wealth of information for active members and retirees on: *retirement planning, pension education, members handbook, prior service credit* and more. .

Get started by creating your MyNYSTRS account at www.nystrs.org.

Dates to Remember

Highway Cleanup

4/27/19 10am – 12pm

Dinner of  

6/26/19 6pm – 9pm





Onondaga County Teachers Association

2019 Legislative Breakfast

Featuring Guest Moderator – Grant Reeher

Pro. Reeher is Director of [the Campbell Public Affairs Institute](#) and a professor of political science at Syracuse University's [Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs](#).

He is also creator, host and program director of "The Campbell Conversations" on WRVO.



Saturday January 12th

NYSUT Regional Office, E. Syracuse
Doors Open at **8:00**

8:30 Breakfast includes: fresh fruit, muffins, scones, breakfast breads, home fries, eggs, sausage, French toast, coffee and juices.

9:00 Panel discussion and breakout meetings with your NYS Senate & Assembly members prior to the 2019 budget/legislative session.

Legislators Invited:

Senators May and Antonacci

Assembly members Finch, Hunter, Magnarelli, and Stirpe

Cost: \$5 Send Checks Payable to:

OCTA 210 S. Main St., N. Syracuse, NY 13212

Please include your name, affiliation, and email address

Cash, checks, Visa/Mastercard/Amex accepted.

RSVP/Payments must be received by Jan. 7th

Refer Questions to: Phil Cleary pcleary@nscsd.org



Sabbatical Time?

The objective of having this benefit in the contract is for the purpose of increasing the professional competence of the individual and raising the quality of instruction. This may be facilitated by study or research beyond levels required for certification, but are related to the individual's field. Below are the conditions, procedures and requirements that should be considered prior to applying:

- Teachers interested in taking a Sabbatical Leave must submit an application by February 15th, 2019. A maximum of two applicants will be selected
- Applicants must have completed 7 consecutive years of service at West Genesee.
- Applicants must have completed their Master's degree or its equivalent
- Selected applicants are paid at $\frac{3}{4}$ of their salary, maintain full benefits and are receive service credit as it relates to salary, seniority and retirement.
- The leave may be for one semester or an entire school year.
- Individuals must agree to return to the district for a period of two years or must repay the salary received (0 years = 100%; 1 year = 50%)
- Sabbaticals will not be granted if applicant has taken any type of leave within three years and cannot take a sabbatical within 7 years of a previous sabbatical.
- Applicants will be notified by May 15.

I took a sabbatical many years ago, and it was a wonderful experience. It truly is a benefit; I encourage you to take advantage of it. It afforded me the opportunity to engage in experiences that I would not have been able to. I took classes at Syracuse University and SUNY Environment Science and Forestry that ranged from the Biology of Cancer to Genetic Engineering and Tissue Culturing. Additionally, I had the opportunity to grade the Advanced Placement Biology Exam in Louisville, Kentucky. This grading took place in late May or early June. Finally, the most rewarding experience was to volunteer at SUNY-ESF as part of a project for the American Chestnut Foundation. American Chestnut trees, which once thrived throughout much of the eastern United States and Canada, were struck with a fungal blight. This blight has depleted the population and prevents chestnut seedlings from growing to a mature age. This multi-university project genetically engineered Chestnut embryos to make them blight resistant.

You don't have to volunteer in a lab. Other selected applicants have traveled or done research locally, worked on curriculum or a variety of other actions that were of interest to them. Please email me mannonforwgta@gmail.com if you have any questions about this benefit.

Contact Your WGTA Executive Officers

<http://www.wgta.net>

John Mannion, President
Email: mannonforwgta@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4601
Cell: 315-333-2094

Mike Perkins, Vice President
Email: beakerperkins@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4631

Dawn Personte, Vice President (Negotiations)
Email: dpersonte@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4631

Mary Gotham, Treasurer
Email: megotham@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4601

Jeanine Stables, Secretary
Email: jstablesster@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4653

Did you know you can take a day from work for cancer screening without being charged a sick day?

As of March 18, 2018, NYSUT members covered under New York Civil Service Law will be eligible to take up to four hours of paid leave for all cancer screenings without charges to them.

*While an earlier version of the cancer screening law entitled employees to take up to four hours of paid leave annually for breast or prostate cancer screening, the new law expands the paid leave with no accrual charges to screening for **all** types of cancer.*

Employees are entitled to leave, or to have credits restored upon submission of satisfactory documentation that the employee's absence was for purposes of cancer screening.

The benefit may be used once per calendar year and does not carry over if unused.

Employees are entitled to leave for cancer screening during normal working hours, and do not need to seek time and attendance coverage. If the screenings exceed four hours in a calendar year, the employee will be required to charge leave time for the difference.

Cancer screening includes physical examinations, blood work or other laboratory tests for the detection of cancer. Travel time is included in the four hours.

After logging into the BOCES sub service, select **BREAST/PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING (119)** from the drop down menu of options for reason of absence.

Thank you!!

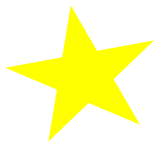


I need to thank the countless members of the West Genesee community, WGTA Officers and Cabinet Members, teachers, teaching assistants, teacher aides, bus drivers, substitute teachers, retirees and others that volunteered for me by making phone calls and going door to door.

I learned many things from going through this venture. One of them is that so many people give so much of their time to causes that are important to them. Politics and campaigns don't just happen in October and November. There are many people who are so passionate about the electoral process that they volunteer by serving on their town committee, fundraising, phone banking, and working through social media to keep citizens informed, get them involved, and highlight issues and candidates that are important to them.



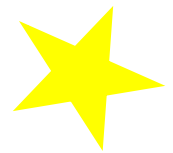
Stop in today to
Camillus' Premiere Pizza Pub
featuring the Best in the West:



PIZZA – WINGS
BURGERS
SALADS – WRAPS

*The Wildcat offers Catering, Free Delivery,
and is the perfect spot
for hosting your Parties!*

3680 Milton Ave. · Camillus, NY 13031
(315) 487-2222
wildcatpizzapub.com



***Get** 10% off food purchases under \$50 when you
show your West Genesee Employee ID.*

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.

The Member ship is published by the West Genesee Teachers' Association-3106, P.O. Box 417, Camillus, NY, 13031-0417.
Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, NEA, AFL-CIO.



Shopping & travel benefits designed for NYSUT members

NYSUT members and their loved ones have access to dozens of endorsed shopping, travel & personal programs available through NYSUT Member Benefits. And unlike with purchasing products available to the general public, there's no need to go it alone when Member Benefits has your back.

Member Benefits acts as your advocate for any program you participate in, and we'll do our best to quickly resolve any issues or concerns you may have. Whether you are participating in one of our shopping/entertainment/travel offerings; auto, homeowners or life insurance plans; or financial or legal services, NYSUT members have the **"Power of the Union"** behind them.

The following is just a small sampling of the endorsed programs available to the NYSUT membership.

Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program

Are you looking to purchase a new laptop computer, washer/dryer or refrigerator? The Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program allows NYSUT members to purchase products such as these and many more while paying for them through the ease of payroll deduction or ACH withdrawals. NYSUT members save 20% on their first order with Purchasing Power.

Abenity Discounts

Seeking exclusive member discounts on tickets to the latest blockbuster movies or theater events, the hottest concerts & sporting events, or the coolest theme parks & attractions? NYSUT members have access to thousands of nationwide and local discounts with the Abenity Discounts program. Abenity also offers an app for iPhone or Android smartphones available at no charge.

Grand Circle Travel

The Grand Circle Cruise Line & Grand Circle Travel program is committed to providing international travel, adventure and discovery opportunities that offer impactful and intercultural experiences. This program offers NYSUT members and their loved ones the opportunity to save \$100 per person on tours or receive a discounted rate on specific trips if acting as a group organizer.

Cambridge Credit Counseling

NYSUT members are eligible to receive free, no-obligation debt and student loan consultations with one of Cambridge's certified counselors. Cambridge also offers a unique web portal available at a reduced rate that can help explain the various options when paying down student debt, including student loan forgiveness programs, income-based repayment options and more.

The Power of the Union

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.