



THE MEMBERSHIP

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

Moving Forward - Don't Stop Now! - Presidents Notes - Michael Perkins

A Time to Reflect

This past Monday I attended the regional organizational meeting for NYSUT. This is a collection of representatives from as far north as Oswego and all the way down to the bottom of Onondaga county. Known as the ED7/8 committee we meet four times per year to address local concerns and organize as a collective of teacher associations.

This meeting of ED7/8 was attended by the President of NYSUT Andrew Palotta and the Executive Director of NYSUT Melinda Person. The focus of their message was celebrating our achievements and working to influence a hopeful future.

President Pallotta and Melinda Person both identified that we all experienced two plus years of extreme trauma. In addition they also explained that as we move out of the pandemic it is important to count our blessings and recognize the gains we've made for the teaching profession over the past five years. Here's some of the major points they both identified:

- 7.2% Increase in state funding to education
- Pause on APPR
- Moving the vetting process from 10 to 5 years for tier 5 and 6
- Voting down the Constitutional Convention
- Elimination of the edTPA exam for new teachers
- Maintaining 99% participation in UNION participation despite Janus

Locally NYSUT has helped us to:

- Increase our local membership by helping us to add occupational therapists and physical therapists to the contract as employees of West genesee and members of the WGTA
- Increase teacher salary by 3.5%
- Increase team leader pay by \$800+
- Provide elementary teachers with a guaranteed and uninterrupted 40 minute planning period
- Protected teachers rights, health and wellness during the pandemic
- Safely return to in-school learning
- Add Universal Pre-K to the district
- Support Board of Education members who value public education and teachers
- Protect teacher and retiree healthcare

All of this was possible because of our members and their support through VOTE-COPE and the dues that you pay for being a member of the West Genesee Teachers' Association and New York State United Teachers. Your support through VOTE-COPE donations has allowed us to place public education friendly legislators into the New York State Senate and Assembly.

Looking Ahead

So, how does the future look? Andrew Pallota and Melinda Person shared their goals and concerns with us.

Moving forward NYSUT has promised to address the teacher shortage in New York State. A large part of this is a focus on fixing tier 5 and 6. President Pallota and Melinda Person explained that this will be a long term process that will target stages for fixing the tiers. Long term, NYSUT is planning to:

- Decrease the number of years tier 5-6 members pay into their retirement
- Move the retirement age for tier 5-6 from 63 to 57

In addition to fixing the tiers, NYSUT has implemented programs to encourage high school students to consider teaching as a profession. NYSUT has established a funding program for locals called "[Take a Look At Teaching](#)." Locals can use this funding to establish paid advisor positions in high schools led by local NYSUT members. Advisors then establish a club for students to explore the teaching profession and work towards a career as a teacher.

The big news that Andrew Pallotta shared with us was that there is more than a good chance that APPR will finally go away. There is strong support in the New York State Assembly and Senate to end the teacher Annual Professional Performance Review process in New York State and return control of teacher evaluations back to local districts. This would be a huge win for teachers and school districts.

Supporting Public Education and the Teaching Profession

All of our success as a union and future gains are dependent on our members supporting candidates that are committed to public education and supporting teachers. There are multiple ways you can do that.

The easiest way to support teacher friendly candidates is to donate to [VOTE-COPE](#) our union political action committee that assists teacher friendly political candidates from both parties. If you already donate to [VOTE-COPE](#), thank you! Please consider increasing your contribution. If you haven't started yet, now is a great time to start securing your future as a teacher by investing in [VOTE-COPE](#). You can click on this link to start supporting your profession now.

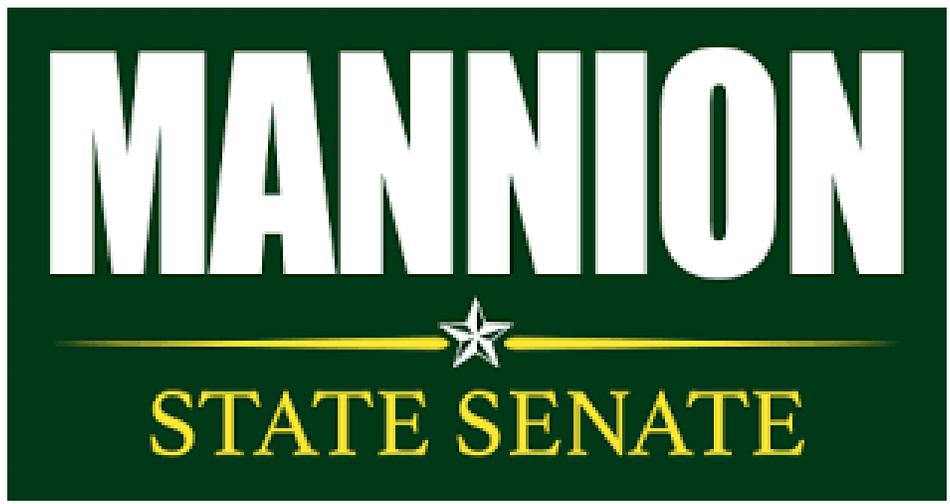


Another way to support teacher friendly candidates is of course to vote for them. NYSUT recently released a list of local candidates that are strong supporters of teachers and public schools.

NYSUT ENDORSED CANDIDATES

<p><u>Statewide:</u></p> <p><u>Governor Kathy Hochul</u></p> <p><u>Lt. Governor Antonio DelGado</u></p> <p><u>Attorney General Tish James</u></p> <p><u>State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli</u></p>	<p><u>New York State Senate</u></p> <p><u>Senator John Mannion</u></p> <p><u>Senator Rachel May</u></p>
<p><u>New York State Assembly</u></p> <p><u>Assemblyman Al Stirpe</u></p> <p><u>Assemblywoman Pamela Hunter</u></p> <p><u>Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli</u></p>	<p><u>National</u></p> <p><u>US Senator Chuck Schumer</u></p> <p><u>Francis Conole</u></p> <p><u>Steven Holden</u></p>

We have a lot to celebrate as a teaching profession, but now is not the time to sit back and let it all fall away. We need to continue to push for change and support political candidates that will work to benefit public schools and the teaching profession. Locally we have the opportunity to support one of our own. John Mannion is up for reelection. Please consider reaching out to John’s campaign through the link below and assisting him with his reelection campaign. If you’d like to do some last minute phone campaigning for John you can email me at perkinsforwgta@gmail.com.



Synergy Development

Conor Murphy, WGTA VP for Grievances

Change can be very difficult, especially for teachers. It is frustrating to feel as though teachers are left on the sidelines as the district continually updates our policies, procedures, and tools. We have the experience, pedagogical knowledge, and awareness of what works best for our students, our classrooms, and our schools. The change to synergy has been challenging, to say the least. It is a reasonable reaction to view this change unnecessary as there was seemingly nothing broken with schooltool. However, one important perspective I have been keeping at the forefront of my own professional practice is that *'doing things the way we have always done them because it is what we have always done'* is not the best path to success, especially if the only goal is to maintain our comfort. One insightful comment I heard from a colleague is that this situation we're faced with is so challenging because "Synergy was not ready for us." There are meaningful processes, traditions, and systems present in **our** school communities that synergy has not yet begun to support. This does not mean that synergy cannot or will not improve to reflect our needs. It does, however, mean that the process of getting things up and running will be bumpy and require thoughtful communication and planning.

As we continue to work with the North Eastern Regional Information Center (NERIC) and Synergy developers, please share concerns and issues related to synergy with building principles, district technology staff, and your WGTA building representatives and leaders. This will help us to streamline the efficient development of this service to meet the needs of our district. In addition, if you find yourself struggling to understand the synergy software and processes please reach out to the teacher leaders in your building who may be available to help you navigate these complications. WGTA representatives are working to the best of our ability to encourage the district to provide adequate support for our teachers on this program. As we continue to grow within this data management system there will be tremendous opportunity to assist our teaching practices and student successes!

Contact Your WGTA Executive Officers

<http://www.wgta.net>

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West Genesee Teachers' Association
Fall Fling



Thursday, November 10th
From 3-7pm

(Food and Drinks provided by the WGTA)



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