

# GTA Today

## Message from the President

In November, the “midterm” elections take place around the country. Additionally, many important local and statewide elections will be held. This year, it is vital that NYSUT members, and GTA members in particular, cast votes in favor of public education and public sector workers.

Currently, there are unprecedented attacks on public sector workers and their unions. Across the nation, and here in New York State, fundamental protections like tenure, the Taylor Law, and pensions are coming under attack. Further, laws like the Tax Cap are having devastating effects on public education in poorer districts across the state.

So, what is at stake?

- The Tax Cap is being fought by NYSUT, but they have lost the latest round. The Tax Cap limits the ability of districts to raise revenue. More affluent districts, which already spend more money per student are able to continue to raise and spend more money. Poorer districts are left even further behind.
- Common Core Testing and APPR, whether we view it this way or not, are linked. Without legislative support, we will not be able to continue to fight for a responsible and reasonable APPR system and common sense testing for our students.

Cont. on page 4

## Contents

Page 2	Retirement Incentive
Page 3	Problem Solving Update
Page 5	VP of Public Relations MS Advisor
Page 6	Elementary Advisors
Page 7	Association Rights
Page 8	Golden Apple Teacher of the Year Nomination Form
Page 9	NYSUT Approved Candidates

# Retirement Incentive

**Below are the contractual requirements for the Retirement Incentive. This is a contractual benefit. Please note the deadlines and know that the decision is irrevocable.**

## 1. Eligibility

The term “eligible” means that the unit member either (a) is eligible to retire with full benefits under the terms governing the New York State Teachers Retirement System (meaning no reduction in benefits due to the unit member’s failure to meet minimum age and service requirements for the applicable Tier) or (b) has a minimum of ten (10) years of District service and is five (5) years or less from first eligibility for full benefits under the NYSTRS. A unit member who becomes eligible for full benefits under the NYSTRS and who fails to apply for the retirement incentive within the time period specified in No. 2 below shall thereafter be ineligible to receive any retirement incentive provided by this agreement.

## 2. Deadline for Applications

No later than December 1, during the final school year of employment of the unit member, the unit member shall submit to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources an application for the retirement incentive, which shall include an irrevocable written resignation for the purpose of retirement from the District effective by the end of the school year in which the unit member first becomes eligible to retire with full benefits under the NYSTRS or will meet the eligibility criteria in No. 1(b), above. The unit member shall also provide whatever additional information or documentation may be necessary to verify the unit member’s eligibility for the incentive. Retiring unit members and the District will execute and exchange satisfactory mutual releases from all future claims.

## 3. Service Requirement

The unit member shall continue in active service in the employ of the District through the last teacher work day of the school year, in which the unit member first becomes eligible under No. 1, above. Unit members who are on or who become eligible for paid or unpaid leaves of absence in or during any year in which such unit members are or become eligible under No. 1 above shall nevertheless be eligible for the retirement incentive and may use approved or available leave time in lieu of the service requirement.

Please understand that if you elect to bypass the retirement incentive in your first year of full eligibility under the TRS (when you don’t have any reduction in benefit), you are not eligible for the incentive in the future.

If you have any questions, please contact the office.

## Problem Solving Update with Brian Casey

It was an active summer for the GTA leadership. There were several impromptu meetings and two formal Problem Solving meetings (July 14<sup>th</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup>). The last Problem Solving meeting was held on September 8th. As you are no doubt already aware, issues are rarely solved in one or two meetings. Below is a fairly comprehensive list of issues that were discussed this past summer and early Fall.

- \* A Step IV grievance regarding a violation of Article IX-a solution is pending.
- \* the Teacher Leader MOA was finalized
- \* the hiring of district mentors
- \* CSE meetings on a teacher day
- \* ESY concerns
- \* Athena coaching issue
- \* safety issues in science classrooms
- \* ACA compliance MOA
- \* retiree health care memo
- \* audio and video taping of teachers/code of conduct committee/elementary report card
- \* Twilight/AC
- \* transfer process

Brian Casey  
GTA Problem Solving Chair



### Contract 101

Personal Days:

“Each unit member shall be allowed up to four days of leave with full pay during the school year for the following purposes: 1) religious observance; 2) legal matters which require absence during school hours; (ie., closing on primary residence, answer legal process, or party to a judicial proceeding; 3) family necessities which require absence during school hours; and, 4) other purposes of similar personal obligation or necessity.”

Please remember, personal days are not to be used for vacations. And, also please be aware that the District can investigate the appropriateness of personal days if they believe the day was improperly used.



## NYSUT Member Action Center

If you haven't accessed the MAC and participated in the political action, please do so. If you have, please continue. Any actions taken by our members will continue to make a difference.

The website is [www.mac.nysut.org](http://www.mac.nysut.org)

Continued from page 1

- Tom DiNapoli, who is up for re-election is a strong advocate for our pension system. When Governor Cuomo tried to get an “interest free loan” from our pension system, it was Comptroller DiNapoli who refused and protected our interests. Comptroller DiNapoli is a strong defender of our interest and our pension. Without a strong voice protecting our interests, our pension could be in jeopardy.
- Campbell Brown, a conservative pundit turned education reformer, has brought a lawsuit on the “behalf” of a few parents challenging tenure protections and layoff procedures. Campbell Brown has no education background, but is funded by Wall Street conservatives and powerful anti-union groups who will benefit financially from the collapse of public education and public sector unions. Read more about Campbell Brown at [realcampbellbrown.com](http://realcampbellbrown.com).

All of these issues have a direct impact on our classrooms, our students, our families, and the security of our future. Further, it is well documented that as unions go, so goes the middle class. We must preserve the promise of public education. Therefore, when Election Day comes, please vote and vote for NYSUT endorsed candidates who will protect public education and public school employees.

In solidarity,

Jason



In order to see who supports educators and public education, in the upcoming election, please visit: <https://mac.nysut.org/endorsed-candidates>

Also, on this page: <https://mac.nysut.org/find-my-elected-officials>, you can view your current elected officials.

## Vice President of Public Relations

As V.P of public relations, I am constantly looking for ways in which members can become more active in the union. We have formed committees in the past with this specific goal in mind and have had varying success. One thing that I have realized over the years is that we cannot sit back and hope that the challenges we face as educators will work out on their own. We need to take action. Every day, teachers are doing amazing things in the classroom and it is time for us to let the public know. Whether it is through social media, conversations with members of the community or through our political action, it is our responsibility to send a clear message: teachers matter. We must champion the cause of public education and be our own public relations advocates. I hope you find time this school year to participate in union activities. As always, we are looking for fun ideas, unity-building events, in addition to the annual, GTA sponsored happy hours. If you have good ideas, or would like to join the PR Committee please email or call the office!

Al Firlit  
GTA VP of Public Relations –GTAVPPR@gmail.com

## Middle School Advisor

Welcome back everyone. Hopefully you all enjoyed your summer.

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Dave Metzger and I am your middle school advisor. This is my third year working at Athena Middle School. Prior to this I worked at Apollo Middle.

This year I will continue a policy that I started last year. Once a month the middle school senior reps and I will meet to discuss middle school only issues. Anyone working in our middle schools is invited to meet with us to share any issues or concerns they have. The dates of these meetings are not set yet but feel free to contact me directly if you are interested in attending. We hold the meetings at the GTA office.

If you have a question or concern and can't make a meeting you can either email me or call me. My extension is 8881.

Dave Metzger

## Elementary Advisors

The GTA Elementary Advisors, Joe Lombardo and Christopher Marino, have been working to make sure that the improved Elementary Report Card is ready for implementation this November. This standards-based report card will allow teachers to report on the progress students are making towards meeting specific Common Core State Standards. They will be working with the Elementary Report Card team to develop ways to gather feedback and reflection to make further improvements as necessary. Chris and Joe have met with many building reps and elementary principals to go over specific details regarding the implementation and to answer questions. The expectation is that grading will be consistent across all elementary schools.

Joe and Chris are part of the Teacher Union Reform Network Team and will be taking part in the meetings this October. Topics including “Building Collaborative Structures and Processes at the District and Site Level” and “Teacher Refinement Practice” will be discussed, as well as other subjects specific to labor-management collaboration.

We can always be contacted with any questions at [gtaelementaryadvisor@gmail.com](mailto:gtaelementaryadvisor@gmail.com).

Chris Marino  
Joe Lombardo

GTA Elementary Advisors  
[www.greeceteachers.com](http://www.greeceteachers.com)

## Association Rights that Impact the Building

### ARTICLE XIX

- A. There will be one (1) bulletin board in the faculty lounge of each school building for the exclusive use of the Association. Such bulletin board, if requested, will be installed by the District.
- C. No unit member will be prevented from wearing identification pins or other similar evidence of membership in the Association or in any other teacher organization.
- D. Building Representatives
  - 1. The Association shall select a building representative for each school building who shall meet with the principal at least once every two weeks, if requested by either person, to review and discuss local school problems and practices.
  - 2. The building representative has the right to schedule Association meetings before or after school and shall be provided ten (10) minutes time at all building faculty meetings if requested.
  - 3. District wide meetings involving unit members shall not be scheduled on the Wednesday afternoons when the Representative Assembly is scheduled to meet.
- E. Upon request of the unit members, the Association may arrange for the installation of vending machines. Such installations shall be in areas accessible only to unit members. Net proceeds from such vending machines, if any, shall be paid to the general fund of the District in accordance with general District policy.
- L. Each principal shall, after consulting with the building's senior representative, designate a unit member who shall replace said senior representative during the homeroom period or its equivalent when said senior representative notifies the principal twenty-four (24) hours in advance, or less in the case of an emergency, that such time is necessary for Association responsibilities.

**ANNUAL  
GREECE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
"GOLDEN APPLE"  
TEACHER RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

Teachers are the heart of our school system. They nurture our children’s inquisitive minds and prepare them for the challenges of the future. They need and deserve our support.

The Greece Teachers Association is sponsoring a program that will honor one outstanding representative of the teaching profession from the Greece Central School District. Please take part in this exciting and worthwhile program by nominating a teacher who exemplifies “excellence in teaching.” For more information, call the offices of the Greece Teachers Association at 621-7970.

**Who is eligible?** All teachers (K - 12, Special Education, Library/Media Specialists, School Counselors, ESL, Psychologists, Speech Pathologists and Adult Literacy) currently teaching in the Greece Central School District.

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**NOMINATION FORM**

Teacher’s Name (First and Last) \_\_\_\_\_  
 School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level/SubjectArea \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nominator’s Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship of nominator to teacher:**

- |                  |                |                  |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Student          | Former Student | Student’s Parent |
| Teacher or Staff | Administrator  | Other            |

Please attach an additional sheet describing why you think this teacher is one of Greece Central’s most outstanding teachers.

**Nominations must be postmarked on or before Dec. 7**

**Mail to: Greece Teachers Association  
3670 Mt. Read Blvd.  
Rochester, New York 14616**

## NYSUT Endorsed Candidates by Senate and Assembly District

### State-wide Office:

- Attorney General-Eric Schneiderman (D)
- Comptroller-Thomas DiNapoli (D)

### Senate Districts:

54-Michael Nozzolio (R)

55-Ted O'Brien (D)

56- Joseph Robach (R)

57-Catharine Young (D)

58-Thomas O'Mara (R)

59-No Endorsement

61-Elaine Altman (D)

62-Johnny G Destino (D)

### Assembly Districts

126-Diane Dwire (D)

130-Bob Oaks (R)

132-Phillip Palmesano (R)

133-No Endorsement

134-No Endorsement

135-Mark Johns (R)

136-Joseph Morelle (D)

137-No Endorsement

138-Harry Bronson (D)

144-Jane Corwin (R)

*The Greece Teachers Association is the sole bargaining agent for the professional teaching staff of the Greece Central School District*

## Contact Information

Website: [greceteachers.com](http://greceteachers.com)

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

Phone: 621-7970

