

**Member Newsletter
Volume V, Issue 4
April 2021**

*Joe DiTucci, President
Jacquelyn Lanpher, 1st Vice President
Rob Allen, 2nd Vice President
Amanda Van Huben, Secretary
Cheri Hall, Treasurer*

Message from the President

April has been a busy and important month. On April 6th, New York State passed its budget. In NYSUT's April 7th statement on the state budget, President Andy Palotta stated,

"It's an understatement to say it has been a tough year, but this budget brings hope for revival starting in 2021. The state is taking the first steps since the Great Recession to fully fund Foundation Aid for K-12 schools, which is a huge boost as districts and educators triage the pandemic-related needs of students and drill down to the underlying academic and social-emotional needs schools were grappling with before the pandemic. Starting to eliminate the TAP Gap,, that has squeezed our public colleges,, also is progress toward maintaining and improving high-quality state and city university systems. For our community colleges, the state is committing to maintaining critical funding that will help these two-year institutions through enrollment fluctuations driven by the pandemic."

It certainly was a historic budget with a 11.79% increase in aid to public schools throughout New York State. This—along with the 3-year phase in of fully funding Foundation Aid that was outlined in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity campaign, and Federal Monies from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020 (CRRSA) and the American Rescue Plan of 2021 (ARP)—ensures that districts across New York will be able to deal with the effects of the pandemic and move public education forward.

The 12th was another big day for education in Spencerport. That was the day the district saw the return of our elementary students for four days of in-person instruction. The amount of work that the entire district has put into making this happen is truly incredible. Our members have been at the forefront of that work, and for that we have much to be proud of. Based on the guidelines approved on April 9 by the New York State department of health, the district decided that our secondary schools will not be able to fully return until the county meets certain guidelines set out in the NYSDOH and CDC guidance documents. Hopefully this will happen soon, and we take another step towards having our students fully return to school.

On April 13th, the Spencerport School Board appointed Kristin Swann as the next Superintendent of the Spencerport Central School District. She comes to us from Victor and will begin on July 1st. On behalf of the STA, I want to congratulate Ms. Swann and look forward to continuing the collaborative relationship we have had with previous superintendents.

So, even in this most difficult of years, there are things to celebrate. I hope you take some time to reflect on the positive. One of my early mentors in teaching told me never to underestimate the impact that I could have on my students. "You never know," he would say. "You never know when what you say, or don't say, or what you do, or how you go about doing it, can have a profound impact on a child." I wish everyone a Happy Spring.

In Solidarity,

Joe

Get to Know Your Contract!

By Rob Allen, 2nd Vice President

What's the deal with alternating in-service and graduate hours?



For this issue of "Get to Know Your Contract," we will look closely at an often-misunderstood element of the contract: Salary Adjustment for Graduate and In-Service (page 33).

- **Note:** This part of the contract focuses on teachers who have already earned their Masters degrees, but this is good information for any member to know.
- **Second Note:** All graduate AND in-service courses require prior approval from the district before you take them. The forms should be located in your school's main office.
- **Third Note:** For the examples given below, I am using courses on NYCTD.org, a site that offers great (and inexpensive) graduate and in-service courses. You could also take courses through SUNY schools if you would like, but they may be less convenient and more costly.

According to the contract, "Blocks of five (5) in-service credits: base salary increased by \$496." However, the next bullet states: "All existing practices continue, and M+30, and in-service compensated in alternating blocks with graduate hours (e.g., five in-service credits then five graduate hours then five in-service credits)." This is where things get a little confusing.

Many courses, including those offered on NYCTD.org, can be taken as either graduate or in-service courses. The in-service courses may require slightly less work than the graduate versions of the same courses, but they are essentially the same. The main difference is the cost: graduate courses on NYCTD.org are \$575 and in-service courses are \$270. However, the district will reimburse half of the cost of graduate courses for up to 50% of the SUNY rate, meaning the district will pay you back half of the \$575 (\$287.50) once you have completed the course and provided proof of payment and completion.

Here is how the alternating credits work. After you earn five in-service credits, you will get a pay bump, but your next five credits *must* be from graduate credits in order to get your next bump. Then, you can go back to earning in-service credits. You could also start with graduate courses and then move to in-service courses. In the example below, the member used two credits earned in the district plus one three credit course from NYCTD.org for a pay bump. They then took two graduate courses through NYCTD.org for their next pay bump. This member can then return to taking in-service courses.

In-Service Courses	Credits	Graduate Courses	Credits
Earned in the district	2	NYCTD Strategies for Helping Students Take Ownership of Learning	3
NYCTD Closing the Achievement Gap	3	NYCTD The Bully Free Classroom	3

Benefits of taking in-service classes:

- If you have earned at least 2-3 in-service credits through classes/work done in the district, you can use those credits towards a bump, which is awesome!
- By alternating in-service and graduate courses, you will save some money since each NYCTD.org graduate course is \$17.50 more than the in-service courses (\$287.50 vs. \$270). This will save you \$87.50 total if you take five in-service courses towards your 30 credits. You will also save even more money if you have enough in-service credits through the district so that you only have to take four additional courses.
- If you are charging the courses on a credit card and you cannot pay off the full amount when the bill arrives, you will accrue interest on your credit card while you wait for your reimbursement check from the district.

Benefits of taking all graduate classes:

- You don't have to worry about the hassle of figuring out where you are on the alternating blocks of graduate vs. in-service courses. Some teachers just take all graduate courses in order to avoid dealing with the headache.
- If you have the full amount saved to pay for each course, you can charge the course on a points or miles credit card, pay it off completely to avoid paying interest, and then the district will reimburse you when you are done. \$575 worth of points is a lot better than \$270.

Bottom Line:

- All courses require pre-approval.
- If you choose to alternate graduate and in-service credits, you might want to make some sort of a chart or spreadsheet to track where you are.
- Save all paperwork (and scan it for your own records) just to be safe.

STA History Class

Teacher Receives Back Wages for Disability Period During Pregnancy

By Peter Randazzo, Past STA President

The year was 1971, and one of Spencerport's teachers was pregnant. At that time, the district had a policy that said a teacher carrying a child couldn't work beyond the 4th month. So, this teacher was forced to go on an unpaid leave for the remainder of the pregnancy. She could have an unpaid child care leave after that, but she was not allowed to use any of her accumulated sick days for any of these leaves.

Two years later, that same teacher was pregnant for child #2, and by that time, the courts had ruled that the teacher could continue working as long as her physician agreed. Sick leave could be used for that part of the pregnancy where she was disabled. She was having some complications with her pregnancy, and her doctor ordered her to stop teaching before the accepted disability period, but our district would not allow her to use her sick days.

That teacher sued the district saying she should be allowed to use her sick days for the period of disability, six weeks before and after the delivery, and any other disability time as determined by her doctor. The courts agreed, and she received considerable back wages. The Division of Human Rights appointed an attorney to represent the teacher in court, and NYSUT's Labor Relations Specialist also accompanied her.

This was the first time ever in our district, and possibly all of Monroe County, that a teacher could use sick days for disability related to a pregnancy. In other words, since 1974, pregnant Spencerport teachers have been allowed to use sick days for disability purposes the same as any man who suffers a broken leg, or any other injury and must take time off.

The STA Newsletter will continually feature "History Class" articles submitted by our retired leaders!

We hope you enjoy these submissions.



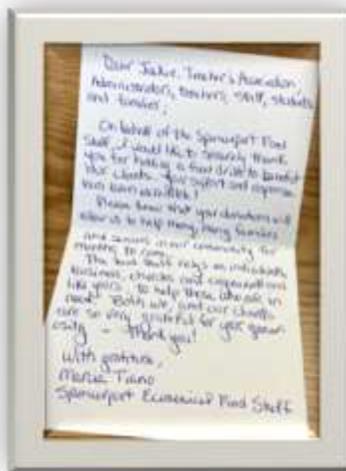


Local News



The Spencerport Teacher’s Association hosted a food drive during the month of February. Faculty and staff from each building, administrators from district office, and members from our community all participated in our generous donation of non-perishable goods and a monetary donation to the Ecumenical Food Shelf. I was able to drop off 4 full carloads of goods! Thank you to all that donated; and thank you to Marcia Tiano at the Food Shelf for working with us; it was a huge success!

Ms. Jacquelyn Lanpher
First Vice-President
Spencerport Teacher’s Association



Spring 2021 Executive Council Meeting Dates

April 15, 4:00 PM, location TBD

May 20, 4:00 PM, location TBD

Email Amanda Van Huben if you would like the link to attend any meeting through Zoom.

2021-2022 Executive Council Meeting Dates

September 16, 2021

October 21, 2021

November 18, 2021

December 16, 2021

January 20, 2022

February 17, 2022

March 17, 2022

April 14, 2022

May 19, 2022

June 16, 2022



Celebrations



Deb Rogala welcomed her third grandson, Dominik Matthew Rogala, on March 30th in Okinawa, Japan. He was 8 lbs, 12 oz, and 20.5 inches. Parents Kevin and Vanessa and big brothers Franco and Leondardo are so excited to have a new family member. Dominik was born March 30th in Okinawa, but it was only March 29th in USA. Will he have two birthdays to celebrate? His Gramma says absolutely!



Deb's daughter, Melanie is engaged. Melanie and John are planning their wedding for September 2022. "We are all so excited and welcome John with open arms to our family."

Deb teaches Art at Taylor.



Cheryl Ebertz' son, Deven Ebertz, made Dean's List at UVM
(University of Vermont) during first semester.
Cheryl is a Teaching Assistant at Taylor.

Alex and Kelly Daniels
welcomed Maeve Caroline
Daniels on March 15th.
She is adored by big siblings
Drew, Anelle and Porter.
Alex teaches science at
Cosgrove.



Pam Robinson's daughter Mallory, who graduates from Brockport High School this June, signed her letter of intent to play Lacrosse at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, just outside of Atlanta. She was accepted into their Honors College Program, where she will be majoring in Sports Management. Pam teaches health at Cosgrove.



Denice Welch's daughter, Caitlin, accepted admittance to Siena College as a member of the Class of 2025.



Our June issue will feature the stories of our 2021 retirees. Please send along any happy news to Emmy Thevanesan for the fall issues!

STA Leadership, 2020-2021

Officers:

President Joe DiTucci
1st VP Jacquelyn Lanpher
2nd VP Rob Allen
PAC Chairs Sue Chatterton and Rob Allen
Secretary Amanda Van Huben
Treasurer Cheri Hall

PAC* Representatives:

Bernabi Laurie Palmateer
Canal View Elissa Kingsbury
Munn Stacy Lonardo
Taylor Danielle Blossom
Cosgrove Janeen Henry
Wilson Dan Pincelli

Building Reps:

Bernabi:

Brianne Eason
Jennifer Ophardt

Taylor:

Danielle Blossom
Ken Rhodes

Nurses:

Kelly Cave

Canal View:

Sue Chatterton
Laura Gannon

Cosgrove:

Gretchen Breon
Janeen Henry
Suellan Morton
Pam Robinson

TAs:

Ellen Borraccia
Cheryl Ebertz

Munn:

Stacy Lonardo
Scott Schwind

Wilson:

Becky DiNatale
Bridget Herrmann
Steve Kelley
Natalie Kirisits
Dan Pincelli

Building Planning Team Reps:

Bernabi:

Laurie Palmateer

Terry Taylor:

Danielle Blossom

Canal View:

Sue Chatterton

Cosgrove:

Emmy Thevanesan

Munn:

Scott Schwind

Wilson:

Rebecca DiNatale

Social Media Coordinator:

Gretchen Breon

Webmaster:

Bryan Swanson

Newsletter Editor:

Emmy Thevanesan

Political Action Coordinator:

Ryan Ewanow

PAC: Professional Advancement Committee; the committee that meets with the negotiations team throughout a contract year

Legal or financial concerns? NYSUT Member Benefits can help

Whether it's assisting NYSUT members with everyday essentials, important choices about insurance needs, or making prudent decisions about financial and legal concerns, NYSUT Member Benefits can help.



Scan the QR codes below to learn more about the following endorsed programs and services.

Legal Service Plan: For a low annual price, our Legal Service Plan provides unlimited toll-free legal advice; a simple will, health care proxy, living will and power of attorney; and guaranteed maximum fees for many legal matters. If a NYSUT member who is a current participant in the Legal Service Plan passes away due to COVID-19, the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco has offered to extend a number of services at no cost to the member's family.



SCAN ME

Financial Learning Center: We recently contracted with popular financial publisher Kiplinger's Personal Finance for our new Financial Learning Center. This interactive microsite offers numerous articles on a wide variety of financial topics, including selecting the best value in tax planning software and more. No matter your point in life or financial situation, you are sure to find something of interest.



SCAN ME

Mid-Island Mortgage: With our UnionDirect Mortgage Discount Program presented by Mid-Island Mortgage, NYSUT members receive special purchase and refinancing mortgage discounts for a variety of home-related needs. Whether you're looking to buy a home, lower your mortgage payment or planning a home improvement project, Mid-Island Mortgage can help you save up to \$2,700 on lender fees and closing costs.



SCAN ME

Cambridge Credit Counseling: Our program with Cambridge Credit Counseling can assist NYSUT members with better understanding their student loan re-payment and debt consolidation options. NYSUT members can receive a no-cost, no-obligation, consultation with a Cambridge certified counselor. Cambridge is also the provider of NYSUT's Student Loan Debt Webinars.



SCAN ME

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families, including the following options:



DINING & SHOPPING DISCOUNTS



TRAVEL & TOURS



CAR & TRUCK RENTALS



LIFE INSURANCE



AUTO & HOME



LONG-TERM CARE & DISABILITY

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org, call 800-626-8101 or scan the QR codes above.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.