Dear Colleagues,

As you know, one of the most important goals we have for our students is to build their confidence, self-esteem, and academic self-concept. While we accomplish this in a variety of ways, creating fair and meaningful assessments that allow our students to celebrate what they have learned is at the top of the list. The recent New York State tests for grades 3-8 did the exact opposite of this!

I am disgusted and outraged with this latest round of the New York State tests. As you know, this latest debacle occurred on April 2 and is further evidence that the state is ill-prepared to administer these tests in a way that will not overwhelm and frustrate our students. The following is a shortened version of what needs to be done to finally get these tests right! Until that occurs, I would like to strongly recommend that you DO NOT allow your own children to take the upcoming math tests!

First, we know more than ever that the state rolled out computer-based testing before they were equipped to do it with fidelity! Like many of you, I watched in horror as 6, 7 and 8 graders grew angry and frustrated when they couldn't submit their tests upon completion earlier this month. It's obvious that NYS and many districts lack the infrastructure and internet ability to handle the volume of students that are on the Questar site at the same time. SED must stop computer based testing until these issues are resolved and a pilot program clearly shows that they have been fixed!

These tests are still flawed! While NYSUT has asked repeatedly for the names of teachers that are supposedly writing these tests, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has refused to provide that information. Additionally, although NYSED has cut the tests down from 3 to 2 days, there are still too many questions on the test. In fact, third and fourth graders spend more time taking the ELA test than high school students spend on Regents Exams or the SAT test. We also know that the tests are not age appropriate because the reading levels are above the grade levels in which they are administered.
While we have known this for several years, it is obvious that the scoring benchmarks are invalid and mislabel kids and school districts. The benchmarks are set after our students take these tests and scores dropped significantly when our APPR was linked to the tests. How is it that in 2017 only 22% of eighth graders were proficient and a year later 70% were found to be proficient when taking the Algebra 1 Regents?

In conclusion, until the NYSED gets these tests right, we all have a moral obligation to opt our own children out and to support the opt-out movement!

In Solidarity,
John
*John Kozlowski, President*

**PAC Chair Message**

I hope everyone enjoyed their Spring Break. Before the break, the PAC rep in each building received hard copies of our contract. You will have a copy by the time you read this. The contract is also available on-line at our website, spencerportta.org. The right to collectively bargain is one of the benefits of union membership, and our contract reflects numerous negotiations sessions over many years. I encourage all members to take some time to familiarize yourself with the contract which outlines the terms and conditions of our employment.

One of the big changes that was made in our recent negotiations was the focus on the High Deductible Health Insurance Plans. I am interested in hearing from those that enrolled in the plan. Please feel free to reach out and share any information. As we move into another round of negotiations next year your feedback, support and cohesion as a unit is critical. All the best as we enter the final few months of the school year.

As a reminder, Monroe County school budget votes take place on May 21st this year.

In Solidarity,
Joe
*Joe DiTucci, Professional Advancement Committee Chair*

**Political News**

*The STA continues to support the Opt-Out movement and ratified a position statement that can be found on the next page. NYSUT also announced a “Correct the Tests” campaign on 4/1/19, and an excerpt from the press release follows.*

“The state’s obsession with high-stakes testing is a failed experiment that needs to end,” NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said. “That is why teachers, parents and students around the state have been working for years to fix New York State’s broken testing system. If we are going to restore trust in the system, we need to fix these tests now.”
NYSUT repeatedly has called on the state to recognize the fundamental flaws in the state’s grade 3-8 testing system and to take corrective actions to address those flaws. The union is again drawing attention to the fact that:

- the state tests are flawed and invalid;
- invalid scoring benchmarks mislabel children;
- ELA and math tests are too long;
- untimed testing can be cruel and traumatic;
- the tests are developmentally inappropriate; and
- computer-based testing is problematic and has been rolled out too quickly.

Instead of correcting the tests, the state is creating a climate in which school administrators are attempting to intimidate parents into forcing their children to take these tests or isolating children who refuse to take them. It is imperative that the state takes immediate action to address reported intimidation that has occurred in some districts prior to this year’s tests.

To address the numerous testing concerns, NYSUT launched CorrectTheTests.com to provide parents and educators with information about the flaws with these tests and about parents’ rights to opt their children out of taking the tests. The website also provides an outlet for parents and teachers to submit stories about testing issues in their schools. NYSUT has begun a public awareness campaign that includes digital advertisements drawing attention to testing flaws.

Spencerport Teachers’ Association 2019 Opt-Out Statement

The grades 3-8 New York State Common Core math and ELA exams are more problematic than ever, which is why the Spencerport Teachers’ Association continues to support parents’ rights to opt their children out. The New York State Education Department continues to mislead the public by stating that the exams are written by New York State teachers; this is not true. Additionally, numerous studies have proven that students score worse when they take exams on computers, yet the State Education Department compels more and more districts to administer computer-based assessments each year. Removing time limits from these exams has resulted in what can only be characterized as educational malpractice, with children as young as 8 years old testing through lunch and even missing their school buses home. The benchmarking process that determines passing scores for these exams takes place after the tests have been scored, which allows test scores to become political tools rather than accurate assessments of students’ abilities. NYSUT has made recommendations on how to rectify these ongoing issues, and we are waiting for the State Education Department to take corrective action.

In March, the STA Executive Council adopted the above Opt-Out Statement. Despite research indicating that students perform worse on exams given on a computer, State Ed continues to push for more and more districts to administer the 3-8 assessments online.
Building News

STA Charity Basketball Game

On February 27th, the STA held its second annual charity basketball game. Thank you to Mark Rennie for coordinating this event!

The event raised a little over $400 for the Ranger Robotics team’s sponsorship of a team from Mexico and for the Spencerport Ecumenical Food Shelf. Approximately 30 high school students and 15 teachers participated in front of a crowd of 100—it was a stormy, snowy night, which impacted turnout.

Cosgrove Spanish teacher Brandon Sartin photographed the event, and additional pictures can be found at the end of this issue.

Cosgrove Book Club

On March 29th, the Cosgrove Book Club had its second meeting to discuss The Immortalists. Like our previous book, Nine Perfect Strangers, the novel was not a fan favorite (and as a group, we recommend neither), but the club still enjoyed discussing the book, eating snacks, and drinking some wine in the loft of Beth Bellinger’s barn.

Our next book is Educated by Tara Westover, a memoir about a Mormon girl growing up without any formal education in a survivalist home. The Cosgrove Book Club is open to anybody in the district, so if you’d like to join the club and attend our final meeting on May 31st, email Rob Allen at rallen@spencerportschools.org to be added to the email list.

Also, unlike our first two books, Educated has been read and vetted by several people in the club, so we know it’s a great read!
Farewell & Thank You, Beth Hoben!

In May, the STA will say goodbye to Beth Hoben, leader of the nurses in our union.

Beth became a nurse with the district in 2005, and about ten years ago, she was instrumental in helping the district’s nurses organize and join the STA. Beth shared, “I saw the power of collective organizing with the teachers and nurses in other districts who were part of their teacher's union. We always had a hard time in negotiations, and we were fortunate that when John Kozlowski saw our contract, he saw our needs and agreed to help. In the union, we were able to bring our insurance ratio up—we were the highest paying group prior—and bring our salaries up to a professional wage.”

Beth is retiring on May 3rd rather than June 30th in order to have some R&R with her daughter, who will be home from Afghanistan and has been overseas for a year.

Stephanie Botelho, nurse at Canal View, and Kelly Cave, nurse at Taylor, will be sharing Beth’s STA responsibilities. Beth concluded with, “United we stand, divided we fall....keep fighting for public education. We all know we are here for the students. Let's make sure the world knows it too. Students first, last and always.”

Celebrations

Ken Rhodes, Instrumental Music Teacher at Taylor, has a personal passion for making independent films. He enjoys all facets of the film making industry. He has written, acted, produced, directed and edited films since he was in High School.

The most recent project he has being released is a film called Star Wars: Scramble on Uylara. The film was written and directed by talented writer/director B. Anthony Gibson. Ken plays Commander Dain Archer.

The movie is premiering at the Cinema Theater in Rochester on Sunday May 19th at 12:15 p.m. This is a free screening for anyone interested in attending.
Ashley & Chris Somers welcomed their third child, a little boy named Michael James, on 4/2 at 8:20 am. He was 8 lbs, 8oz and 21 inches long. Big brothers Luke, 3, and Jack, 2, are very proud. Ashley teaches P.E. at Cosgrove.

Ryan Barclay and his wife Kayleigh welcomed their second child, Iain Connor Barclay, at 10:32 pm on April 10th. He was 7 lbs 10 oz., and Mom and Baby are both doing well! Ryan teaches music at Cosgrove.

Deb Ingerick’s granddaughter, Olivia, is turning 3, and she will be starting school at the Trinity Montessori school in the fall. She will also have a new brother or sister in September 2019. Deb teaches Art at Munn.
Ian and Megan Milam welcomed a baby boy, Theodore McLane Milam, on March 5th. Ian teaches 4th grade at Bernabi and Megan teaches 5th grade at Canal View.

Marilyn Mang and her husband Garett welcomed their second daughter on January 17. Bianca Rose weighed 7lbs. 15oz. and was 20 1/4 inches. Bianca’s big sister Audrey is a great helper and loves snuggling with her. Marilyn teaches first grade at Canal View.

Sam LeBeau and her partner Kyle welcomed a baby girl, Gwen Elle, on March 6th. She was 7 lbs, 11 oz. and 20 inches long. Sam teaches FACS at Cosgrove.
As you celebrate milestones and achievements in your personal life this school year, send a quick email to one of these STA members so your happy news can be shared with your colleagues in the next issue of the STA Newsletter!

Bernabi- Bri Eason  
Canal View- Sue Chatterton  
Munn- Stacy Lonardo  
Taylor- Danielle Blossom  
Cosgrove- Frank Cafarella  
High School- Jackie Lanpher

STA Calendar of Events

May 10th – Spencerport Education Foundation Fundraiser, McColley’s, 3:00 PM – 5:30 PM

May 16th – Executive Council Meeting; 4:00 PM; Cosgrove Room 626

June 5th – Spencerport Fireman’s Youth Parade & STA Book Give-Away Event

TBD – New Teacher Ice Cream Social at VICS

Check your email for information about volunteering to help with our last book give-away of the year, on Wednesday June 5th at the Spencerport Fire Department’s Youth Parade!
STA Charity Basketball Game Photos
Interested in sharpening your leadership skills?

Rochester Women in Leadership Summit

Mark your calendar for a free women’s leadership conference in Rochester sponsored by the NYSUT Women’s Committee. The day-long event features a series of empowering and informative workshops to train the next generation of strong female union leaders.

Saturday, May 11, 2019
9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
NYSUT Rochester Regional Office
30 North Union Street, 1st floor conference center
Rochester, NY 14607

Register at:
http://www.nysut.org/eReg/RWILS
Our newsletter includes this infographic each issue to remind members about the organized attack to deprofessionalize public education across the country and how we can take action.

An excellent resource to stay informed and to get involved is NYSUT’s Member Action Center. [https://mac.nysut.org/](https://mac.nysut.org/). You can sign up to get action alerts sent to your cell phone each Tuesday. When calling lawmakers or members of the Board of Regents to advocate for our profession, consider using these talking points:

- Oppose vouchers, and ask for your lawmaker’s position
- Oppose charter expansion/lifting the charter cap/increasing funding for charter schools, and ask for your lawmaker’s opinion
- State your support of strong unions for a healthy middle class, and ask for your lawmaker’s opinion on right-to-work legislation
- Call to inform your lawmaker that you are a constituent who supports public education; that you believe charter schools and vouchers are an unsustainable drain on resources meant for real public schools
- Tell your lawmakers to address the root cause of achievement gaps between districts: poverty
- Contact members of the Board of Regents and share issues/topics that you believe should be their focus and priority
- **Oppose the October 2017 SUNY Charter Regulations allowing certain charter schools—some of the state’s largest chains—from certifying their own “teachers” in five weeks of training**
STA Leadership, 2018-2019

Officers
John Kozlowski, President*
Joe DiTucci, 1st Vice President*
Jennifer Ott, 2nd Vice President*
Joe DiTucci, PAC Chair*
Jacquelyn Lanpher, Secretary*
Cheri Hall, Treasurer*

Nurses’ Representative
Beth Hoben*

Teaching Assistant President
Laurie Wood*

Bernabi Building Reps
Bri Eason*
Laurie Scutella*

Canal View Building Reps
Sue Chatterton*
Laura Gannon*

Munn Building Reps
Matt Fink*
Scott Schwind*

Cosgrove Building Reps
Rob Allen*
Janeen Henry*
Suellan Morton (alternate)
Pam Robinson*
Teresa Trujillo*

Wilson Building Reps
Kristin Cocchiara*
Bridgette Hermann*
Becky DiNatale*
Steve Kelley*
Amanda Van Huben*

Taylor Building Reps
Danielle Blossom*
Medea Bonny*

NYSUT At-Large Delegate
Gretchen Breon*

Political Action Coordinators
Ryan Ewanow
Emmy Thevanesan

PAC Representatives
Ryan Ewanow, Bernabi
Sue Chatterton, Canal View
Stacy Lonardo, Munn
Danielle Blossom, Taylor
Doug Lennon, Cosgrove
Jacquelyn Lanpher, Wilson

Social Media Coordinator
Gretchen Breon

Webmaster
Bryan Swanson

Newsletter Editor
Emmy Thevanesan

BPT Representatives
Laurie Scutella, Bernabi
Sue Chatterton, Canal View
Stacy Lonardo, Munn
Danielle Blossom, Taylor
Doug Lennon, Cosgrove
Kristin Cocchiara, Wilson

*Denotes Executive Council vote
Legal Service Plan
NYSUT members have access to dozens of endorsed programs available through NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality legal and financial planning assistance services that can help to protect their loved ones and provide them with peace of mind.

For an annual fee, the Legal Service Plan — provided by Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. — offers legal expertise on a variety of personal legal matters such as dealing with a speeding ticket or handling estate planning. With the base plan, you'll get access to unlimited, toll-free advice from plan attorneys.

Financial Counseling Program
Meanwhile, the Financial Counseling Program — provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. — offers unbiased, objective advice customized to your specific financial situation. The full-service program provides you up with to six hours of toll-free phone consultations with a certified financial planner or registered investment advisor.

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 legal or financial services; insurance plans; or shopping, travel or entertainment offerings, NYSUT members have the "Power of the Union" behind them.

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.