



## President's Column

This month's President's Column focuses on two important upcoming issues.

- On May 17, 2016, district residents will have the opportunity to cast their ballots for two open school board positions and vote to accept or reject the proposed school budget. Both of these votes impact teachers and students directly. The terms of Barb Babiarz and John Piper are expiring, and both Barb and John have decided to run for re-election. The PEA is actively supporting their candidacies.



I frequently receive questions regarding what the responsibility of the school board is in district policy making. This might be a good time to outline the duties and responsibilities of Board of Education members.

Interestingly, school board members make up the largest body of elected officials in the United States. Each school district has its own BOE composed of members who have been elected by district residents.

School boards are non-partisan, and members serve terms ranging from two to four years. (Penfield BOE members serve three-year terms.) Terms are staggered so all seats do not become open at one time. Generally, a candidate for a school board position must be 18 years old, a citizen of the state and resident of the district, a registered voter, and eligible to run under the State Constitution. School boards actually derive their power and authority from the state. They are charged with establishing policies and regulations by which their local schools are governed.

According to the NSBA (National School Board Association), “Decisions made by the school board affect virtually every important aspect of local schools, from boundaries to bus schedules, curriculum to clubs, funding to field trips.” The school board hires and evaluates the Superintendent; sets priorities and adopts the budget that determines how millions of federal, state, and local funds are spent; sets goals for student achievement and evaluates progress toward those goals; decides how school boundaries are drawn; and approves school construction or closure. The board also sets policy regarding textbook acquisition, program adoption, and the purchase of technology. It is not a stretch to claim, as the NSBA attests that “The overall quality of your local schools, both now and in the future, rests with decisions made by the Board of Education.”

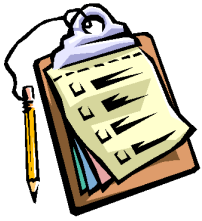
Even though Barb and John are running unopposed, we want to make this election process meaningful. We need to ensure that PEA support carries weight whether or not our endorsed candidates run unopposed. This is one way our collective voice can be heard.

Both Barb and John have proven themselves to be strong advocates for teachers and students. Each of them values teacher input and both are receptive to our concerns. The PEA intends to mail post cards to community members encouraging them to vote for the re-election of Barb and John and to vote “YES” to the district budget. We are considering the possibility of staffing a phone bank, as well.



We will be seeking volunteers, and more information will be forthcoming as to how you can become involved. Our hope is to have a strong union presence in this election.

I firmly believe that having a strong relationship with the Board of Education will benefit us in moving forward to our next contract negotiation. I meet regularly with the school board president, and I attend BOE meetings on a regular basis. I encourage our members to attend a meeting or two – not to “make a statement – but to observe the work of the board. Although watching the video feed is fine for “information gathering,” there is something to be said for attending the meeting in person. Being present affords you the opportunity to interact with colleagues and community members and to have a conversation with school board members.



- **TERT:** Jim Peiffer and I (or another TERT member) will be attending upcoming faculty meetings to outline all APPR changes for the coming (2016-2017) school year. As a reminder, all APPR requirements remain the same for this year. There are no changes to our APPR procedures until next year. Simply put, the deadline for submission of artifacts remains May 1, as in past years. However, in accordance with directives from the state, ELA/Math 3-8 NYS test scores will NOT count toward teacher growth scores, and students will not be negatively impacted by their test scores.

Penfield's proposed APPR plan has yet to be approved by the state, but we are in the process of finalizing the roll-out of information to teachers now. Teachers will have access to the proposed APPR document. It is important to remember that our plan must be approved by the state before implementation can take place. We are hopeful that the state will approve our plan; the TERT team worked very hard to compose a plan which the state would find acceptable while ensuring fairness to all stakeholders.



**Administrative Professionals Day** will be celebrated on Wednesday, April 27. Let's all take this opportunity to thank our administrative assistants, secretaries, and other office personnel for the valuable contributions they make to the workplace. Who among us has not run into an office at the last minute with a question, a request, or a "has to be solved right now" problem?

**Nurses' Day** will be celebrated on Friday, May 6. Where would we be without our school nurses? Whether it is bandaging a knee, dispensing medication, or dealing with a serious health issue, nurses are on the front lines every day looking out for the health of both students and staff.



Take a moment to say thank you to these hard-working individuals who play such vital roles in our schools. Why not stop by their offices to say "thanks," or send an

email or a card? I will be sending a special note to both Administrative Professionals and Nurses on behalf of the PEA.

**Kudos to our colleagues in print:** “Team Work: Inquiry Development Process for Sixth Grade Social Studies” by Kim Tinder and Kim Cristal was published in the Winter 2016 Edition of *In Transition Magazine*. The article outlined the process for implementing the new Social Studies Framework for sixth grade students. *In Transition Magazine* is a publication of the New York State Middle School Association (NYSMSA).

It doesn't seem possible, yet here we are ready to begin the fourth quarter. These last weeks will pass quickly; let's make the most of them. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

We remain UNION STRONG.



Regards,

Bob Young

## **Can You Spare 50¢?**

As public employees, almost all conditions affecting our professional environment, working conditions, and pension rights are determined by the actions of the New York State Legislature, the Governor, and Congress. If we wish to have a positive influence on our professional future, we must take an active part in the political process. You can make your voice heard, and at the same time make an investment in your future by contributing to VOTE-COPE, NYSUT's political action fund.



PEA begins its 2016 VOTE-COPE drive on May 1<sup>st</sup> with the distribution of individual contribution forms to each building representative. Our goal this year is to increase our total contributions by 20%. A modest increase of 50¢ per paycheck would help tremendously. Forty percent of your contributions *come back directly to the PEA* for our own political activities.

Contributions to VOTE-COPE are voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate without any reprisal, and you will not be favored or disadvantaged for exercising this right.

Please consider a contribution to VOTE-COPE –it is an investment in your future. Thank you for your past contributions and for your continued support.

In Solidarity,

Russ Byer  
VOTE-COPE Coordinator  
Penfield Education Association



*Contributions to VOTE-COPE are not tax-deductible.*