



PENFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
United in Excellence

NOVEMBER 2015

BROADSIDE



President's Column

As we begin American Education Week, there is no better time to recognize the exemplary work of our educators in Penfield as we reflect on what we have accomplished and on what lies ahead.

Over the course of the past two weeks, I have been visiting the buildings and attending PEA meetings. As I spoke with our members and listened to their concerns, I was struck by the similarity of important issues across all buildings and grade levels. But the common thread I heard most revolved around the desire to be able to do more for our students. Our faculty makes "going above and beyond" the norm rather than the exception. We became teachers because we wanted to make a difference, and we work hard every day to ensure that our students are given the best education we can possibly provide. I said it before in the opening issue of the *Broadside*, and I will repeat it here: Teaching is a noble profession, and nowhere is this more evident than in our own district. It is an honor and a privilege to work side by side with you each day. Thank you for your commitment to excellence and your tireless efforts on behalf of our district's children. What better time to reflect on our calling as teachers than American Education Week?


Tuesday, November 17, has been set aside as School- Related Professional Recognition Day throughout New York State. The celebration of this day is a result of years of advocacy by NYSUT. The bill creating a permanent recognition of SRP's was signed into law in 2007, and ever since, these valuable professionals have been formally recognized on the third Tuesday of November. Karen McGee, NYSUT president, says it best in the most recent issue of the NYSUT Newsletter: "School-Related Professionals are dedicated and hardworking. The many titles that make up the term SRP (bus driver, monitor, custodian, and school nurse, secretary, and teacher aide, to name a few) show the depth and breadth of the important work they do in our schools and for our students each day. Our SRP members are a vibrant part of our schools, and of the NYSUT family. Their advocacy and support enriches our union."

On behalf of the PEA, I sincerely thank all of our SRP's. They make an invaluable contribution to our school community and enhance our culture of collegiality. I hope each of us takes a moment this week to thank these colleagues who are truly our partners in education.

I have recently received some questions regarding the increased visibility of Dr. Putnam and Assistant Superintendent Peiffer in our buildings. I can assure you that they are not conducting unannounced observations, and that they are not “checking up” on teachers. I applaud their decision to have a more visible presence throughout our schools, and I encourage you to invite them into your conversations. We are all part of Team Penfield, and if we are going to become true collaborative partners in educating our district's children, we have to start with a conversation. Be proud of your work. Our district leaders are visiting the schools because they want to hear from you, and these visits are opportunities for you to engage the district office in meaningful dialogue and to share your expertise.

Since our October *Broadside*, there have been no updates regarding the issues with securing substitutes or utilizing TA's, but I know that conversation is continuing at the district level. This is a complicated problem, and it will not be solved overnight. I am heartened by the district's commitment to address it, however, and I am hopeful that the conversations will continue and that a resolution can be reached in the near future. You are encouraged to make your concerns known to your building reps or to me.

Reminders:

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- Open Enrollment: Health and Dental Open Enrollment Dates are November 16-December 11. If you are considering a change in your current plan(s), I would refer you to the November issue of the District Personnel Letter for more information.
 - NYSTRS (New York State Teacher Retirement System): Tom Krueger and Hope Vogel are our NYSTRS delegates. The annual meeting of NYSTRS delegates was held November 1-2. Tom encourages all members to check out the NYSTRS website to sign up for a “MYNYSTRS” account and to explore the information contained therein. It is NEVER too early to start planning for your retirement. Feel free to call Tom (after school between 2:30-3:00) or email him with any questions or concerns.

Please do not hesitate to take your PEA concerns to your building reps or to me.

I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving.

In solidarity, we are UNION STRONG.

Bob Young