



Lockport Education Association

May/June 2022 Newsletter



www.lockportea.org



President's Update...

Courtesy of Scott Reddinger

Sisters and Brothers,

I want to thank each of you for your collective efforts over the past few years as we have pushed through the challenges of COVID-19. Amidst fatigue, burnout and at times personal illness, we have all risen to the occasion to give our students and families the best we possibly could in the face of this global pandemic. To that end, we are stronger together for enduring the experience as union educators. May the summer ahead bless each of you with a much needed normalcy and the promise that your return in the fall of 2022 should be back to classrooms and schools as you once knew them.

Personally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Greg Bronson for his leadership throughout his service as LEA President the past four years. His knowledge, intellect and staunch defense of our membership is unwavering. While each previous LEA President faced their challenges, no one could have predicted the global pandemic that occupied Greg's tenure. On behalf of the officers, executive committee and members of the LEA, thank you for your years of service, dedication and leadership!

I am a firm believer that in life, we all have a calling. I was recently reminded of this when I looked at the inscription in a book from my father wishing me great success at the start of my teaching career and eventual pursuit of a degree in administration. While my original plan was to go in one direction, it wasn't until I set foot in LHS and was surrounded by strong unionists, that I recognized my true calling; *service to the union and the membership of the LEA*. I am humbled and honored to be serving as LEA President and promise to lead with the same vigor, enthusiasm and conviction of those who have come before me.

The union is many things to different people. For some it is contractual benefits, rights and responsibilities. Yet for others, it is social events, comradery and solidarity. The bottom line is the union is all of these things and much more! If NYSUT has said it once, they have said it a thousand times...*we all need to take the time to ASK others to join union activities, run for union positions, and support union causes!* I challenge each of us to do our part in the coming year to make the ASK of our sisters and brothers. TOGETHER we are stronger. UNITED we are unbreakable. In SOLIDARITY we are unstoppable!

With a newly ratified four year contract and the hopes that COVID-19 is moving a little further behind us, let's chart a new course in 2022-23 that includes a little more laughter, excitement, fun and solidarity in our classrooms, learning spaces, faculty rooms, buildings and personal lives. Wishing each of you and your families a very happy, safe, and relaxing summer vacation. A very special congratulations to our LEA retiree class of 2022. Godspeed - you will be missed!

In Solidarity,
Scott



LEA

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National Teacher Appreciation Week

National Teacher Appreciation Week was held the week of May 2 - May 6, 2022. It is with tremendous gratitude that we THANK YOU for all that you do for our students!



National Nurses Week

National School Nurses Day is celebrated this year on Wednesday, May 11. We cannot thank all of the Nurses enough for all they have done for our students and our staff. It has been a tremendous undertaking these last two years with the pandemic and the Nurses have been a steady source of information and assistance with keeping all of us safe and healthy. THANK YOU!





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Getting to Know Your Building Representatives



Name: Tracy Tubinis

Current building: AMJHS

Other buildings worked In: None

Years in LCSD: 6

Years as rep: 2

Why do you feel the role of the building rep is so important to our membership?

My husband encouraged me to get involved with the Union. He works for General Motors and has been involved in his Union throughout his career and has always stressed the importance of the Union. Also, this is my first teaching position where being in a Union was an option, so I was interested and wanted to learn more about it.

Do you have a favorite LEA memory?

One of my favorite events has been the Vote Cope gathering at the New York Beer Project. It was not only a great time with my colleagues but it was also an opportunity to see other people from other school buildings. Sometimes (especially the past few years) our jobs can be very stressful. The LEA events create a time for us to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Any words of wisdom for our newest members?

I would encourage new hires to get involved. The Union is a great way to get to know the people within your building and within other buildings. The Union has definitely helped me build relationships with people who I don't interact with on a daily basis in school. It helped me understand our CBA.



Name: Laura Scapelliti

Current building: AM

Other buildings worked In: RBK, Hunt

Years in LCSD: 14

Years as rep: 4

Why do you feel the role of the building rep is so important to our membership?

I feel the role of being a building rep is to represent our members in a positive light, making sure to educate and support our members and be reflective. A union is only as strong as its members, we need engagement, support, ideas, and spirit!

Do you have a favorite LEA memory?

LEA Holiday Parties are always a great time!

Any words of wisdom for our newest members?

Know your contract! Get involved in LEA activities!



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We thank and celebrate all of our retiring Teachers, Teaching Assistants and COTAs! Here are some words of wisdom from the retirees and what they plan on doing during their well deserved retirement.

Name: Debbie Cottrell
Building: Aaron Mossell Junior High School
Years in Education: 22
Advice for Our Colleagues: Have fun with your students! They need YOU!! Always be kind!
Plans for Retirement: We plan to travel and camp a lot and enjoy my grandchildren more!!



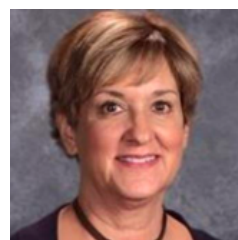
Name: Paula Senio
Building: Charles Upson
Years in Education: 30
Retirement Date: October 14, 2022
Advice for Our Colleagues: Speak your mind even if your voice shakes. Know your contract and support your union.
Plans for Retirement: Working on that bucket list!



Name: Chris Sivecz
Building: Charles Upson
Years in Education: 28
Advice for Our Colleagues: Consider establishing a channel or method by which communication is easy and comfortable. Be respectful. Try to hear what your colleague has to say and pay attention to how they respond to your advice. But most of all, be kind!



Name: Margo Collins
Building: George Southard
Years in Education: 22
Advice for Our Colleagues: Appreciate your fellow colleagues.
Plans for Retirement: Traveling and enjoying my 8 grandchildren





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Name: Mary Wohleben
Building: Lockport High School West at Charlotte Cross
Years in Education: 35
Advice for Our Colleagues: "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant." -Robert Louis Stevenson
Plans for Retirement: Upon retirement I will be traveling to see my children on a more frequent basis. I am looking forward to volunteering my time to service organizations, charities, etc. which are in need, and to pursuing my hobbies with greater intensity.



Name: Sherrill Maier
Building: Lockport High School
Years in Education: 32
Advice for Our Colleagues: Always do what's best for kids.
Plans for Retirement: Follow my favorite sports teams (Bills and USWNT), teach my grandson to play soccer, play more golf, enjoy my family and crazy dogs.



Name: Andrea Pratt
Building: Charles Upson
Years in Education: 30
Advice for Our Colleagues: Set boundaries around work and take care of yourself too.
Plans for Retirement: A second cup of coffee in the morning



Name: Lisa Ciccirelli
Building: Charles Upson
Years in Education: 33
Advice for Our Colleagues: Use the mistakes your students make as a learning opportunity to become a better teacher.
Plans for Retirement: I will be selling real estate and working for Niagara County doing early intervention speech therapy.





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Take a Look at Teaching (TALAT) Committee

Courtesy of Heather Hall - GS

The LEA Take a Look at Teaching (TALAT) Committee is ready to implement and start the 2022-2023 school year. Here are the appointments for the upcoming school year to implement the program throughout the district:

- **TALAT Coordinator:** Lindsay Siejak - LHS
- **TALAT Club Advisor:** Jill DiTullio - LHS
- **TALAT Club Advisor:** Mike Gunsolus - LHS
- **TALAT Club Advisor:** Shelley Bochicchio - LHS
- **TALAT Club Liaison 7-8:** Lindsay Newman - AMJHS
- **TALAT Club Liaison 5-6:** Kirsten Burke - EBIS
- **TALAT Club Liaison K-4:** Erika O'Brien - GS



For more information on the TALAT initiative, please click on the link below:

<https://takealookatteaching.org/>

Summer Wellness

Courtesy of Heather Hall - GS

The summer months for teachers are our time to recharge and reset for the upcoming school year. Here are some self-care and mindfulness activities for the summer to help you enjoy your summer vacation!

- **Exercise** - Walk, swim, bike, run, yoga in the park, etc. When doing these activities, be mindful of your surroundings - what do you hear, what do you see, what do you smell. Take it all in!
- **24/6 Life** - Take a "Tech Shabbat." The purpose of this is to unplug from technology for one day a week and take time for yourself. I highly recommend this practice and use it even throughout the school year.
- **Meditate** - Headspace offers a free subscription for educators when using your school email. They offer guided meditations and so much more.
- **Take a vacation or staycation** - Summer is the best time to relax and unwind. Find fun places to explore in NY and beyond!
- **Family and Friend Time** - During the school year we give so much to our students that we sometimes forget what is most important. Enjoy your time with your family and friends.
- **Self care** - Do something fun for yourself! Whether you like to take in a baseball game, go to the spa or just sit outside on your porch, take time for you!

You are worth it!



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Executive Vice President
Courtesy of Shawn Haley - GS

APPR SUSPENDED **2022 APPR BILL**

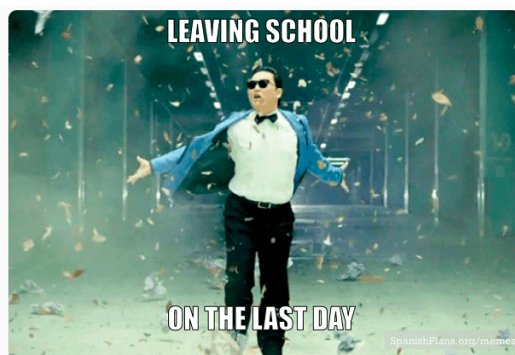
On May 13, the Governor signed Chapter 201 of the laws of 2022. This bill, which passed unanimously in both the senate and assembly, eliminates the requirement for school districts and BOCES to complete an annual professional performance review (APPR) for any classroom teacher or building principal for the 2021-22 school year. The bill also assures that state funding will not be withheld from any school district for not completing the APPR in these school years. This bill acts as an extension of Chapter 112 of the laws of 2021.

This is a direct result of our VOTE/COPE contributions. Please join the hundreds of LEA members who have already contributed to VOTE/COPE. We need the support to address the NYSUT agenda and provide protection for members across the state and here locally.

VOTE/COPE is Needed More Than Ever, Here are the Priorities:

- \$100 million for community schools
- \$14.26 million in additional funding for teacher centers
- Repeal the draconian receivership law
- Improve access to school nurses and mental health professionals
- Fix Tier 6 - It took 24 years to fix Tiers 3 and 4. Tier 6 has been in place for 10 years and 1/3 of our membership is now in Tier 6 (close to half of ERS as well). We need tier equity to help make this an attractive profession. It's time to start working to fix Tier 6 so that members aren't contributing 3-6% until they are 63 years old.

Have a wonderful summer and enjoy your much needed break!





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VP Elementary (K-6)

Courtesy of Heather Hall - GS

Congratulations to our retirees! We are so thankful for their membership, their friendship and how they have enriched the lives of the students of the LCSD. Enjoy your retirement!

Please take time for yourselves this summer. We **give** and **give** and **give** to our students and profession, that we forget to take time for ourselves. Enjoy your summer vacation!

One of our retirees offered me some great advice in regards to VOTE-COPE that I wanted to share. They told me, "Remember to put your money where your mouth is. VOTE-COPE is so important to the future of education and our benefits." When considering your yearly donation, please remember that VOTE-COPE funds are working towards the betterment of education and our own futures, like those when we retire. Tier 6 is harmful to current and future educators. Please consider making any donation possible so NYSUT can eliminate Tier 6.

VP Secondary (7-12)

Courtesy of Lindsay Siejak - LHS

I am excited for the opportunity to represent our 7-12 membership for the 2022-2023 school year. I have been teaching for 10 years and started my LCSD career in 2015 at AMJHS as a Special Education Teacher. I have spent the last 6 years at the high school where I have served on several committees getting to know many of you. As a building rep for the past several years, I have learned so much in regard to our contract, the importance of listening to our members, and speaking up for them.

I look forward to working more closely with the various committees within our union and with members at LHS, AMJHS, and LHSW. We work in a district with amazing teachers and we are fortunate to have a strong union, thanks to those who have served over the years. Please feel free to reach out to me, I look forward to working with all of you to keep our union strong and the best it can be for all our members.

Treasurer

Courtesy of Steve Young - AMJHS

Have a fantastic summer!



Executive Secretary

Courtesy of Cheryl Larkin - EBIS

Practice the 3Rs: Rest, Relax and Rejuvenate!





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Explore all your union membership has to offer!



It's never too early
(or too late) to make
plans!

Find out how NYSUT
Member Benefits can
help you make the
most of your summer.

Check out the **MB Discounts & Deals** program in the **Shopping, Travel & Personal** section of our website to start planning (and saving) today.

Thinking of your next big adventure? A family trip or summer vacation? Member Benefits Discounts & Deals offers great savings of up to 50% on flights, hotels, car rentals, attractions and more when planning a trip.

Whether you want to explore other countries or the United States, Member Benefits Discounts & Deals has you covered. From London to Miami to Las Vegas to Paris, there are an abundance of other savings available as well! Restaurants, museums, theme parks, walking or bike tours, ziplining, sightseeing cruises, city exploration activities ... the list goes on. You can access these