

LTA EXAMINER



Lynbrook Teachers Association

May 2013

The Official Newsletter of the Lynbrook Teachers Association

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

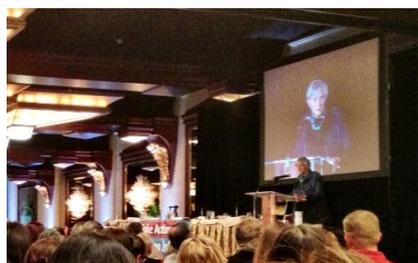
IN THIS ISSUE

Current Issues

Highlights from the President's Report and various NYSUT communications

TALI- Take Action LI

On May 1st, TALI hosted an event featuring nationally recognized education expert Diane Ravitch. NYSUT Executive Vice President Andy Pallotta said, "THIS is really exciting." Our movement has gotten attention and everyone is fired up about it. At the end of the night, Andy Pallotta tweeted, "Long Island can turn this state around."



Here are some quotes from Diane Ravitch from that night:

Regarding **unions**: "When we lose unions, we lose the instrument that creates the middle class."

Regarding **Race to the Top (RTTT)**: "The nature of a race is that someone wins and everyone else loses... the exact opposite of equality in education."

Regarding **testing**: "You can't use testing to close the achievement gap."

Regarding **school vouchers**: "Watch out for tax credit programs that act like vouchers."

Regarding **privacy**: "Inbloom [funded by Bill Gates] will sell children's privacy."

Regarding **taking action**: "I have a dream that all of Long Island opts out."

Other activities from TALI week included wear Red for Ed day, informational brochure distribution, and a postcard campaign to Governor Cuomo to protest the tax cap.

Vote-Cope

Thank you for your contributions to VOTE-COPE. This political action fund goes a long way in bringing about change that affects our working conditions and pension rights. Enemies of public education have a lot more money than we do, therefore, every penny that we collect is important. There are several important legislative issues that need our financial support.

ONE VOICE UNITED

RALLY TOGETHER

Educators, parents, students, community

June 8th • noon • Empire State Plaza • Albany

Rally

Page 3



Representative Assembly

Page 3



Board of Ed Candidates

Page 4



Colleague Corner

Page 4

YOUR LTA



<http://lynbrooklta.org/>



[LTA on Facebook](#)



[@LynbrookLTA](#)

LTA Executive Board (593-1929)

President

[Craig Kirchenberg](#) (HS)

Advocate Vice President

[Neil Giordano](#) (SM)

Educational Vice President (Secondary)

[Mike Spinella](#) (HS)

Educational Vice President (Elementary)

[Donna Smith](#) (WE)

Treasurer

[David Rabinowitz](#) (HS)

LTA Building Reps

Your building reps are a great resource. Don't hesitate to contact them with any questions you may have.

High School (887-0200)

[Amy Ezagui](#), [Mary Kirby](#)

[Sue Moller](#), [Robyn Raleigh](#), [Jen Turner](#)

North Middle (887-0282)

[Roseanne Mitchell](#), [Regan Murphy](#)

Marion Street (887-0295)

[Victoria Schiller](#), [Anthony Simone](#)

[Patricia Wierzbicki](#)

West End (887-0288)

[Dave Ajello](#), [Rita Callahan](#)

Waverly Park (887-6589)

[Amy Garfinkel](#), [Jackie Marino](#)

Kindergarten Center (887-8065)

[Kathy Freehill](#), [Joan Kocher](#)

South Middle (887-0266)

[Kristin Affrunti](#)

[Anne-Marie Calitri](#), [Jen Fusco](#)

From the President's Desk

by Craig Kirchenberg

When I was a kid, I was that student who always wanted to know why. Knowing a fact wasn't enough for me. I needed to understand why – why it was important, why and how it would be useful, why, why, why, why, why.

Some may say that I never got past that two-year-old why stage, but I prefer to look at it as my being an independent thinker. I never wanted to be *common*. I always felt like looking for the *common* limits one's ability to find that which is *uncommon*. It is *uncommon* thinking that has led to society's greatest advancements. As the Apple slogan says, "Think Different."

I remember sitting in math class – it must have been middle school – learning about lowest common denominators. I couldn't get past the word *common* – especially with the word lowest attached to it. I missed the whole point of the lesson because I was being shown how to find the lowest common denominator but I couldn't get past thinking about how *common* to me wasn't a good thing.

I remember sitting in English class, learning about research skills, learning about common knowledge. There was that word again. I learned that common knowledge didn't need to be cited because everyone knows it, should know it or can find it. In that context, it immediately made sense to me that if information is *common*, then it wasn't enough to prove a point. It made sense to me that *common* was only a beginning, not an end.

I remember sitting in history class, learning about Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Again, that word. I thought I would hate that essay based on the title, but I loved that he was appealing to the average man to think and act in *uncommon* ways. There's nothing *common* about that.

I remember sitting in an education workshop, learning about the Common Core. I immediately thought *if it's common, it can't be good*. Why, in education, would we want to strive for what is *common*? Why wouldn't we strive for more than that – the *uncommon*? The Common Core is not fundamentally flawed in and of itself. Philosophically, on paper, it's not a bad idea. There are however, some fundamental problems:

- If it's *common* knowledge we're after, it's only the beginning, not an end.
- The Common Core is being used as an instrument to "close the achievement gap" through standardized tests, but all instruments are designed to do is measure.
- Testing, testing, testing. The increased high-stakes standardized tests emphasize the Common Core standards, but performance does not equal learning.

Our elected leaders make statements and policies that they ask the public to believe is *common* sense, and the majority of the public seems to accept information as *common* knowledge without questioning the veracity of that information, even when they know that it came from a questionable source.

I will not stand by and accept that it is ok to be *common*. I will be in Albany on June 8th, and I hope you'll join me. Together we will:

- Demand a moratorium on the Common Core
- Demand fewer standardized tests
- Demand more money for our schools and opportunities for students to learn

In Solidarity,
Craig Kirchenberg

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Budget Vote

May 21
Please be sure to vote in your home town.

Rally in Albany

June 8th
Email ltamailbox@lynbrooklta.org
as soon as possible if you want to attend.

WHY RALLY?

- Because our voices need to be heard.
- Because children are more than a test score.
- Because students deserve excellent schools, not cuts and caps.
- Because students deserve access to public higher education and the opportunity it affords.
- Because we must support our students, our union and our communities.
- Because ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, we'll be in Albany June 8 to fight for the future of public education – and so should YOU!

Representative Assembly

The RA is the union's highest policy-making body, except for a membership referendum. All NYSUT members are welcome to attend the annual Representative Assembly, but only duly elected and reported delegates may debate and vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, proposed resolutions and other business that might be brought before the Representative Assembly according to NYSUT Constitution and Bylaws provisions or policy.

[Delegates resoundingly pass resolution on state tests](#)

Last month at RA 2013, delegates unanimously passed a resolution on state tests. The resolution calls on the State Education Department and the Regents to use test results only to evaluate this year's Common Core implementation and not in any high-stakes decision-making regarding student or teacher performance.

[Delegates question Commissioner King on tests](#)

Delegates were tough, yet respectful, as they asked State Education Commissioner John King a series of questions about why his department is overemphasizing standardized tests and moving so fast on Common Core assessments. Their questions focused largely on what the state's obsession with testing is doing to their students.

Will You Be There?

Rally- June 8th, Albany

Thousands of New Yorkers are expected to join together on June 8th in a Fight for the Future of Public Education. Their voice - your voice - needs to be heard in this era of attacks on our profession and on what's good for students.

NYSUT has issued a clarion call to all union members, parents, students, grandparents and community members to be at a June 8 rally in Albany to fight for the future of public education.

We must "cry out with one voice" against those threatening to destroy public education, NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi declared in announcing plans for the rally.

The rally is "a fight about the truth - not the lies we suffer through every day." he

said. "It's a fight about the future of public education and getting it right! It's about celebrating, not demonizing, educators ... it's a fight about supporting quality in higher education, not pathways that lead to

"Our collective voice must not be wasted or depleted frivolously through unbridled passion, nor should it be left to die on the vine or be reasoned into oblivion."

NYSUT President Richard Iannuzzi

nowhere ... it's a fight about informative assessments, not the tyranny of obsessive standardized testing!"

Members and locals across the

state are already making plans to add their voice to the fight to take back public education. Regional offices are reporting that interest is already so high, it is becoming a challenge to reserve buses. So, don't wait!

The rally begins at noon and features speakers and music. Children are welcome.

Come make history on June 8th!

"I am going to the rally because it is more critical now than ever before to become a more active participant on the issues that matter most in maintaining excellence in public education."

Amy Garfinkel

"I'm going because I will not stand by while my children's personal information is shared with private companies without my consent!"

Jennifer Turner

"I'm going to Albany because I will not stand by and watch from the sidelines while public education get destroyed and then ultimately privatized."

Craig Kirchenberg



- 10 You have realized public education is being hijacked by for profit organizations.
- 9 You are tired of reading about how ineffective you are at your own profession by people who know nothing about education.
- 8 You believe high stakes testing is out of control in New York.
- 7 You believe you have not had enough time to learn the Common Core yourself, let alone have your students tested on it!
- 6 You believe your students' personal information, including their state assessment results, IEPs, and personal data, should be kept confidential.
- 5 You believe your effectiveness rating should be kept confidential.
- 4 You believe that NYS should report the amount of tax payer money spent on state assessments.
- 3 The word PEARSON makes your skin crawl.
- 2 The tax cap has caused the reduction of school programs and the layoff of thousands of school employees in New York.
- 1 You are a caring professional who wants the BEST public education for your own students, children, and grandchildren and you know this isn't it!

ONE VOICE UNITED

RALLY TOGETHER

Educators, parents, students, community

June 8th • noon • Empire State Plaza • Albany

Colleague Corner

New Babies

Joy Levine and her husband, Adam, welcomed their new twin boys, Jason Scott and Oliver Keith, in March.

Tara Bridges and family welcomed their new baby girl, June Matilda, on April 5th.

Kelle Barth and her husband, John, welcomed their new baby girl, Michaela Rose, on May 7th.

Christine Desimone had a baby, Logan Benjamin, in May.

Retirees

Jane Colgan, Howard Gurr, Susan Lindner, Maria Lewis, Alice Reichenberg

Weddings this Summer

Carol-Ann Pryor is getting married in Aug.

Chris Kozak is getting married in July.

Robyn Bass is getting married in August.

Laura Devine is getting married in August.

Jessica Kuehn is getting married this summer.

Congratulations

Marianna Flannery, a 2nd Grade teacher at Marion Street, is pleased to announce that her daughter Sarah Flannery is graduating from SUNY Geneseo this spring.



CONGRATULATIONS, DR. BURAK!

Dr. Burak has been unanimously appointed as our new Superintendent, effective July 1, 2013.

Dr. Burak is a lifelong Lynbrook resident, and has served as a dedicated teacher, administrator, and leader in the Lynbrook schools for 20 years.

Board of Ed Candidates

by Kim Herrmann

Meet the candidates Night

First up is William Belmont. Mr. Belmont is running unopposed for his third term. Dr. William Kayen, the incumbent is also running for his third term, and is being challenged by Mrs. Heather Hanson. All three answered a variety of questions provided by members of the audience at *Meet the Candidate Night* held in the high school cafeteria, April 30th and hosted by the Lynbrook PTA Council. The upfront responses each candidate gave provided a wonderful opportunity for residents to gage each individual's perspectives on a variety of issues.

One of the issues that was discussed was based on college applications and admittance. Mrs. Hanson's response included the belief that the focus should be to ensure that students get into the "right college for them," not just the most competitive one. Dr. Kayen, on the other hand, believed that the Lynbrook Guidance department should do more to help connect students with competitive colleges.

Curriculum

The candidates also differed on views regarding the curriculum and what is actually taught in class. Dr. Kayen believed all students should receive a more rigorous academia much earlier on. For example, Dr. Kayen believed that introducing foreign

language, science, and mathematics to students earlier on would prepare them more thoroughly for the challenges they face. Mrs. Hanson seemed to agree but thought more autonomy should be given to teachers regarding the direction of curriculum and what is done in the classroom. She was also very vocal in her concerns and dissatisfaction regarding Pearson and the push towards more mandated testing.

Administration

All three candidates believed that it was the imperative to allow the administrators to administrate. They seemed to support the idea that each building knows itself and should make the decisions pertinent to it, under the guidance of the Superintendent. They viewed their role as a school board trustee as supportive, to oversee the schools, not make specific decisions for them.

Who are the Candidates?

Dr. Kayen has two children who have graduated from the Lynbrook schools. Mrs. Hansen has two children currently in the district and has been an active member in the PTA at both West End and North. Mr. Belmont also has two children in the district and has participated in a myriad of activities in the community as well.

Whoever you vote for, please make sure to VOTE! May 21st.



LTA Receives NYSUT Community Service Award

For the second consecutive year, we have received the NYSUT Award for consistently evidencing a belief in community service.

Some activities the LTA has participated in are: Collecting and distributing donation items for victims of Superstorm Sandy, contributing to Project Hotshots, which donates over 1500 backpacks and school supplies to kids in need. Also, we awarded \$7,025 in scholarships to graduating seniors and children, and sponsored Fly With the Owls run/walk.

Thanks to everyone who helped us achieve this award.