

RTA news, November 18, 2008

- The next RTA dinner seminar for PD credit is scheduled for December 9. It is now on AVATAR. The speakers will be 2 parents from California who have organized parents with the teacher union help.
- There is a workshop on Mindsets December 5. There is a daytime and a dinner seminar that has a fee attached. The pamphlet is posted on the RTA board.
- Grievance Info: October 24 the first group of master award recipients has received their money. The next group is scheduled to receive their money on December 19. There are 400 names that RTA and the district are still working through. After Thanksgiving, you can call Martha Keating to see if you are in the next group to receive the money. You should be receiving an e-mail once they are done with the paperwork to let you know.
- RTA Officer elections will be held this spring. The calendar for nominations and when the election is counted will be posted on RTA board.
- Rochester Teacher Academy will have courses posted on the AVATAR site. There will be training for the new, updated AVATAR program, especially for new teachers. The schedule for the training is posted on the RTA board.
- There are about 150 teachers presently in the system that need the 175 PD hours every 5 years according to their certification requirements. The district has made an agreement with the union that the Wednesday PD hours and the Superintendent Conference Days should be enough each year to make the 175 hours in 5 years. However, teachers will need to put the hours into the AVATAR system. It is important to learn how to do this so that you will have the documentation when needed.
- Tutoring - Dial A Teacher SES has started in 9 buildings with about 500 students and 150 teachers. Please support this program because the money they make is used to support the Dial A Teacher program that helps children with homework by telephone, at the Arnett Library, and on WXXI.
- Legislative Committee wishes to thank everyone that voted and supported the NYSUT political candidates. Now it is important to contact the NYS legislators to tell them to support education in this time of budget cuts. You can go onto the NYSUT website, NYSUT.org, and click on the Legislative Action Center to send a message to your legislator.
- Urbanski and J. Pavone were answering questions about the possible cuts as a result of the NYS cuts to school districts. J. Pavone said that with the amount cut there could be 520 layoffs if the governor pushes the midyear cuts. NYSUT is lobbying and are confident to avoid midyear cuts. The NYS Senate is pushing the governor to make known the specific cuts and will not likely approve what, if any, can be listed. A. Urbanski said that it could still be a possibility.
- Another problem is that the governor is inclined to go along with mayoral control of districts. NYSUT is fighting this.
- A third problem is that the Superintendent is saying that there is a \$44M deficit for next year even without NYS cuts. AU said that this could be setting the stage for negotiating.

- Vote Cope -- Now is the time to become a member to help fund NYSUT lobbying for educational issues (only \$1 or \$2 per paycheck) Only 1/3 of RTA give to Vote Cope. We need many more members to show support to NYSUT.
- In Albany, School Board members are asking to suspend the TriBorough Ammendment of the Taylor Law for a year which would guarantee a salary raise if districts do not negotiate in good faith. Without the TriBorough Ammendment when a contract ends the school board will not be pushed to negotiate with the union. Urbanski said that we should be prepared that the TriBorough Ammendment will be suspended in this economic setting. Again you should appeal to state legislators not to vote to do this.
- Human Relations - Please give Reps the name of your Martin Luther King student.
- Special Education Committee -- Jeff Feinberg spoke about problems with special ed students going to the ATS rooms because students are not receiving services but they need to be responsible for behavior and the consequences. Adam Urbanski said that teachers need to get parents to speak up about procedures that are not acceptable. The Special Ed Committee will continue to meet about these issues.
- Jeff Feinberg asked that common questions and concerns with answers of Sp Ed teachers be posted on the RTA website.
- President Report: Thursday Board Meeting on School Safety -- Adam Urbanski said that this is the beginning on negotiations and teachers need to come out to show support for the union. All eyes will be on the number that come out by the Superintendent, Board, and the press. We need to come out to show support for fellow teachers and the union. He would like everyone to come out and if you want to speak, call 262-8525. BENTE and RAP are recommending that their members come out to speak about what they are seeing in the schools.
- A union rep from East high has been suspended and is in the "rubber room" because he has spoken out about the disruptive students, the danger to others, and the lack of control at East.
- A teacher from East high spoke about the desks being thrown down the stairwells, wheelchairs being taken away from handicapped students to have races down the hall, and a gang going into a room, ripping the phone off the wall and barricading the door so that they can beat up a student.
- Board member Campos toured East high, seeing groups of students wandering the hall, not going to classes and said that she sees it is "unruly" but doesn't see the danger in it.
- Elementary teachers need to be concerned with these issues also.
- If you go to the Board meeting, you should dress warm in case they won't let all the teachers in. The parking lots at CO and the Credit Union are open. There is a lot across from the Credit Union. If you want to car pool, you can park at RTA. There will be signs to carry. If you get into the meeting, be vocal in support of what people are saying.
- Adam Urbanski wanted to let all members know that he participated in an AFT press conference this week with the new AFT president who has asked him to work on a new committee that will look for and support innovative educational programs throughout the country. It will be a

multimillion initiative that will be active in September. Presently, A. Urbanski will do both jobs, but once it is in full swing, he may have to choose between them. Now he is here to lead negotiations.

- One teacher suggested that we wear RTA/NYSUT buttons, lanyards, etc. to show support to our union.

UNOFFICIAL REP ASSEMBLY NOTES