



### GNTA REPORT

**Guest Editor**  
Frank Bua

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### EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Frank Bua

**High School Director**  
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## Your Vote Counts

On Monday, May 2, GNTA will hold elections in all buildings for the purpose of selecting a new GNTA President and an Elementary Director, K-2. This issue of the *GNTA Report* is dedicated to bringing you the biographical information of all the candidates.

Who is eligible to vote? Only teachers (full-time, part-time, hourly), nurses, psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors, and physical and occupational therapists vote for the officers and directors of the Great Neck Teachers Association.

Here are the candidates for President and Elementary Director, K-2. As you can see, the only contested election is for the position of President.

### President

*Jim Daszenski*  
*Dennis Mooney*

### Elementary Director, K-2

*Sandra Kaufman*

Statements from the candidates are located on pages two and three of this newsletter.

# Statements from the Candidates

## JIM DASZENSKI

▪ **President**

### MY EXPERIENCE

I have always seen my work in GNTA as a service to a profession I love. People don't become teachers because they want to be unionists, and yet I learned early in my career that I couldn't be the kind of teacher I wanted to be—and that my students needed me to be—without the backing of a strong GNTA.

I came to the Great Neck South High School English Department in 1999, and I have been working for GNTA for the past 13 years. I joined my BRC in 2003, and when I was elected co-chair in 2006 I helped lead the fight that made South High the first school in the district to have a wi-fi network for our staff's personal devices. Since 2008 I have been a Trustee on our Benefit Trust Fund, helping to manage the dental, excess medical, and optical plans for our members. In 2010 I became GNTA's first webmaster, and in 2011 I was elected to the Executive Board as the Vice President for Administration where my duties include maintaining our website, editing our newsletter, and running our elections. In 2015 I was deeply honored to be chosen by the Executive Board as our Chief Negotiator for the last round of contract negotiations.

### RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUR NEW CONTRACT

I am extremely proud of my experience and of GNTA's accomplishments in which I have played a part. In just the past few months, the Executive Board was able to convince the Board of Education to offer a potential retirement incentive. This is something of great value to many of our veteran members that the district had no intention or obligation to offer this year. Recently, the Superintendent denied several personal day requests for religious observance on Holy Thursday. After Sheila Henchy and I met with the Superintendent, she reversed her position and approved those personal day requests. Last fall we brought a tentative contract agreement to our membership after several arduous months of negotiations. We didn't get everything we wanted and we certainly didn't get as much as we believe we deserved—and we made a difficult concession regarding new hires. However, that concession is far less draconian than what the district originally demanded, thanks to our tough stance at the negotiating table. The bottom line with this new contract is that everyone is making more than before and no one is working longer hours without compensation.

### GOING FORWARD

Last fall, my opponent led the opposition, urging our membership to vote against the tentative contract agreement. His theory was that we should hold out and demand more money. I can tell you that this strategy would have been disastrous for us because our Executive Board knew last fall that we did not want to be working on an expired contract when the 2016 tax cap number came out in January. By urging GNTA members to vote no on the tentative agreement, my opponent would have had us back at the negotiating table right now demanding more money from the district even while we are currently facing layoffs and a five million dollar budget deficit that is predicted to be even worse next year. The challenges we face now are more dire than we've ever experienced before. It seems as if every day there's a new assault on tenure or collective bargaining rights. Locally, we're fighting for a fair teacher evaluation system and against an unfair tax cap that's doing tremendous harm to our students and our schools. And we may soon face a grave threat in New York State to our defined benefit pension system. I agree with those who say that either we are going to be the best generation of unionists in history—or we're going to be the last. This is no time to elect a union president with minimal experience.

As president, I promise to fight for you every day. I will fight to protect and expand your professional rights, and I will fight to make sure the administration and the community recognize in deeds, not just words, the outstanding work that we all do to educate the children of Great Neck. I would be honored to have your vote on May 2.

## Summer Scholarships

The 2016 Summer Scholarships have been announced! Brought to you by GNTA and the Great Neck Public Schools, Summer Scholarships are available for courses or programs that are subject-matter oriented. The application deadline is Thursday, April 21, and an advisory committee will announce the final selections by May 15.

[Get the application...](#)

## Mark Your Calendar



### **Late Spring Recess**

April 22-29

*Schools closed*

### **UPTC Meeting**

Monday, April 11- 7:30 p.m.

*South High School*

### **Delegate Assembly Meeting**

Thursday, April 14- 4 p.m.

*South High School*

### **Board of Education Meeting**

Tuesday, April 19 - 7:30 p.m.

*North Middle School*

### **GNTA Elections**

Monday, May 2

*All schools*

## Save the Date

On Wednesday, May 25 from 4-7 p.m. at the Westbury Manor, we will be honoring this year's retirees and celebrating the close of another school year.

## DENNIS MOONEY

### ▪ *President*

When I am asked, "Why are you running for president?" It seems cliché to say because we need change. But, if our last contract negotiation has taught us anything, it has taught us that the Board has changed their approach on how and what they will negotiate. Therefore, the union needs to change its approach on how it deals with the community, the board and even our own membership. We need a new philosophy on what our Union should be doing. The focus needs to be brought back to the district level.

During the contract negotiations we had been told repeatedly that we did not have the community's support. If this is true, then we need to come up with grassroots efforts to win that support back. We cannot wait four years when it's time to negotiate the next contract. We must act now!

There is no one to blame here. Things in this district have been run the same way since the 1980's. We have become complacent as a membership because the school board and our negotiating team always seemed to reach a fair agreement. Even in the prior contract the board came to us and said, "Times are tough, help us get through this and we will take care of you," so we went along (or we worked with them). However, during this last contract negotiation, the rules changed. The board is trying to divide and conquer us by creating a new salary schedule for new teachers, and by eliminating step increases for current teachers.. We need to send them a clear message, you will not divide us!

In order for us not to be divided we need to take ownership in our union. Everyone has to be included in the process; we need to shake the complacency. There needs to be full transparency. Think about the great discussions that were going on in the forum I created during contract negotiations. We didn't always agree, but it helped us understand each other's rationale. We were able to communicate from building to building as one! We need more ideas like this. I have the vision and determination to help guide us through these uncharted waters. But I will not be doing it alone, we will do it together: One Union, One Union Strong. The board of Ed has sent us a wakeup call, how we respond going forward is crucial.

I currently co-chair BRC at South High School. I have served on two CICs, BCG, and just recently I was asked to represent South High as we questioned the Board of Education on this year's budget and cuts.

## SANDRA KAUFMAN

### ▪ *Elementary Director, K-2*

My name is Sandra Kaufman and I am running for the position of GNTA Elementary Director, Pre K-2. I have had the privilege of teaching in the Great Neck Public School system for over 30 years. During that time, I have been an active member, as well as chair, of the BRC, BCG, and Shared Decision Making Committees. I have also served on Health and Safety and many Selection Committees. I am currently a member of the Internal Organizing Committee, the co-chair of BRC at JFK, and a member of the Delegate Assembly. I am seeking your support in expanding on these experiences by becoming a member of the GNTA Executive Board.

In addition to my many years teaching in this district, I am a fourth generation Great Neck resident, a product of the Great Neck School system and a second generation Great Neck teacher. I chose to live in Great Neck, and raise my two daughters here, because I knew first hand that this is an exceptional school system with dedicated teachers and superior programs. I am committed to upholding the high standards and excellent education this district has always offered its students. Even with all the challenges facing the educational profession, Great Neck remains a high quality school system, and I believe that is because of our strong and dedicated union.

If elected, I believe that my experience in this district, my knowledge of this community, as well as my understanding of how our union operates, will help bring a unique viewpoint to the Executive Committee.

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