The Great Neck Teachers Association

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GNTA Report

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sisters and Brothers,

Thanks to your efforts, and the hard work of our union colleagues across New York State, I believe we are very close to defeating the Constitutional Convention this Election Day. But we're not there yet.

As you know, on November 7, New Yorkers will be asked if a Constitutional Convention should be held to re-write the state's governing document. While this ballot referendum could severely jeopardize environmental protections and our own retirement security, unless we vote NO, it's our students who have the most to lose.

Giving the green light to a Constitutional Convention in New York could have disastrous effects on public education. Article 11 of the N.Y. State Constitution guarantees all children a free public education. A yes vote on Proposition One could imperil this fundamental right. Our state's Constitution also sets a cap on charter schools. Advocates of vouchers, parochial schools, and charter schools are pushing for a Constitutional Convention so they can funnel money away from our schools and into privatized, largely unregulated institutions with little accountability. It's unfair to ask taxpayers to foot the bill for those who make the conscious decision not to send their children to the public schools. Great Neck residents rightly take tremendous pride in their public schools, which are the cornerstone of an equitable society and a strong democracy, and a place where all students are guaranteed a world-class education.

Although some positive things may come from re-writing the state's Constitution, liberals and conservatives alike should fear the prospect of such a convention. Powerful special interests with deep pockets see revising the Constitution as a chance to advance both far-right and far-left agendas. Re-writing the Constitution is a Pandora's Box we must not open. In addition, a convention would be extremely costly, with an estimated price tag of up to $100 million. Surely, our legislators can find a better use for those tax dollars. A convention is also entirely unnecessary, because there is already a democratic amendment process in place, and the Constitution has been amended many times in our state's history without the need for a convention.

In what is considered an off-year election, voter turnout is likely to be low. Every vote will be extremely important. I hope you'll join our phone banks at the Cottage on November 1, 2 or 6 from 3-5 p.m. to call our NYSUT colleagues in Great Neck to ask them to protect public education, defend our environment, and prevent wasteful government spending by voting NO on Proposition One on November 7.

In solidarity,

Jim Daszenski
President, Great Neck Teachers Association

GNTA REPORT

Editor
Frank Bua

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Why should I vote NO to the Constitutional Convention?

Opening the New York State Constitution puts too much at risk. There are things in the Constitution that need to be changed, but opening it creates the opportunity for some basic rights and protections to be modified or eliminated. Listed below are rights that might be threatened:

- The right to a free public education (Article 11, §1)
- Prohibition of reductions in public pension benefits (Article 5, §7)
- Rights to workers compensation (Article 1, §18)
- Rights pertaining to union membership and collective bargaining (Article 1, §17)
- Social welfare rights (Article 27, §1)
- Prohibitions on the use of state monies to assist religious schools ("Blaine Amendment" Article XI, §3)
- A budget role for the state Legislature
- Adirondack "Forever Wild" protections
- State land and forest protections

What is the purpose of a Convention?
Advocates of the Constitutional Convention believe that this is a once in a generation opportunity to introduce necessary reforms including ending political corruption and protecting our most vulnerable populations. Proponents also believe that the New York State Constitution is antiquated and needs to be updated. However, the State Constitution has been changed over 200 times using an amendment process that already exists.

How are delegates selected and reforms implemented?
Voters have the opportunity to elect the 204 delegates and vote on the proposed changes. However, as we have learned from the past, most delegates are career politicians. It is unlikely they will introduce reforms to end their own corrupt practices. Furthermore, large amounts of money will be used by private interests groups to sway the appointment of delegates to the Convention. And although the public votes on the reforms past practice leads indicates that laws will be bundled together pitting good changes with bad changes in an attempt to get specific things pushed through.

TAKE ACTION NOW!!

What You Can Do?

- **Educate** your friends, colleagues and family. Encourage them to vote NO!
- **Make phone calls** to NYSUT members on November 1st, 2nd and 6th from the Cottage or from home. Remind them to vote NO!
- **Vote NO on 11/7** Shall there be a convention to revise the Constitution and amend the same?

by Michelle Sorise and Joan Greenberg, GNTA's Political Action Coordinators

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

GNTA President Jim Daszenski and Superintendent Teresa Prendergast

Chris Deo (Voya), Art DeBernandino (Merkin and Gordon), Kim Semder, (GNTA)

Michelle Friedman, Cathy Faraone and Barbara Arnold

Kirsten Kuhn and Maxine Bazzani, New Members Coordinators

HERE'S TO THE CLASS OF 2017-2018!

On October 18, GNTA welcomed its new members at a reception at Luigi's of New Hyde Park. There were presentations from Art DeBernadino of Mirkin and Gordon; Khary Pitt of NEFCU; Anita Minakyan, Multimedia Center Coordinator; Elena Teixeria, Director of the Teacher Center; and Michael Norberto, GNTA VOTE-COPE Coordinator. Special thanks to Maxine Bazzani and Kirstin Kuhn, GNTA's new, New Members Coordinators, for planning this event!

Elementary Teachers

Newly hired teachers at **E.M. Baker** include: Alyson Bonura (special education), Bryan Dombrowski (grade 5), and Meaghan Zuniga (special education). Rebecca Schapira (grade 5) is a new teacher at **J.F. Kennedy** School. Lakeville welcomes Meagan Baker (special education) and Debra Conboy (reading). Michelle Friedman (prekindergarten) and Francesca Hanson (special education) are the new teachers at **Parkville.** New teachers at **Saddle Rock** School are Renee Remi (special education) and Ariel Rothbaum (reading).

Secondary Teachers

New teachers are **North High** are: Barbara Arnold (science), Melissa Baldassarri (special education), Jordan Barbach (science), Samantha Barratt (art), Samantha Bindrim (mathematics), Susan Chung (study skills), William Corrao (English), Jason Fiermonte (science), Linda Haase (art), Eileen Madigan (English), Lauren Maksym (social studies), Thomas McDonald (social studies), and Rachel Rahr (study skills).

New teachers at **North Middle** School: Katie Carmody (mathematics), Paul Derych (TV studio), Crystal DiMarco (English, also at **South Middle** School), Kandisse Kis (Language Other Than English), Eugina Mazzolla (special education), and Tayla Plotke (social studies).

New teachers at **South High** are: Daniel Chiu (mathematics), Christie Merrick (special education), and Francis Miata (mathematics). New teachers at South Middle include Samantha Kramer (special education) and Dawney Pang (family & consumer science).

(List courtesy of Jessica Vega, GNPS Public Relations)

A brief note from your New Members Co-Coordinators, Maxine Bazzani & Kirsten Kuhn. . .

As we begin the school year, please remember to reach out to us with any questions to help you navigate your first year in GNPS. Also, always feel free to call on members of your BRC buddies and TAC representatives. We encourage you to take full advantage of all the services and opportunities afforded to you. Get involved, show what you know and teach (or attend) a Technology Academy class, attend PDG meetings, join your school's BCG, sign up for professional development courses, attend Board of Education meetings (if you can), observe your peers (with their permission, of course).

And don't forget to check the New Members Google Classroom for information, tips, and hot topics.

Did You Know...

Benefit Trust Fund

Our major medical insurance is administered through the district offices. However, dental, vision, excess medical and some truly helpful legal services benefits are administered through the GNTA Benefit Trust Fund office. Call Monica Martin at 516-829-9086 if you have any questions!

Is the number of written evaluations on which any decision by the administration to terminate a probationary teacher must be based. See Article 42(D)(3) in the contract for more information.

CIC

Stands for **C**ontract **I**mprovement **C**ommittee, a representative group of teachers tasked with brainstorming, aggregating, organizing and formulating contract proposals one year before contract negotiations reopen. The committee consists of teacher volunteers from each building, and all ideas and input are welcome!

INTERNAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (IOC)

by Cindy Pavlic, Chair, IOC

The Internal Organizing Committee (IOC) was created with the purpose of increasing GNTA membership involvement and building bridges with the community, and within the GNTA. The IOC includes 13 committee members, with each building having representation, that volunteer their time and effort to promoting the committee's mission. We are actively looking for representation from North High and additional representation for both middle schools. Please contact your IOC and/or BRC rep, or Cindy Pavlic (IOC Chair) if you are interested.

Last year was a successful year for the IOC and GNTA as a whole, with the first annual Paint Nite that was held in March, which raised $385 for a scholarship to the summer enrichment programs, that immediately went to a family in financial need. This year's projects will focus on building what we started last year by increasing the amount raised for the summer scholarship to reach more families. We will be planning the second annual Paint Nite to be held in the winter. In addition, we will be looking into developing our own "Color Run" event in the spring that will raise money for the same cause and involve the community with our fundraising endeavors.

This year was the first year of the GNTA "Swag" store in response to a growing demand for GNTA apparel that coincides with the changing seasons. Items will soon be shipped to the Cottage, where they will be sorted and delivered to members in their respective buildings.

In terms of "internal organizing," the IOC, in collaboration with our Political Action Coordinators, Local Action Project team (LAP), and the Executive Board, formed the **Member Engagement Group** (MEG) to be our "boots on the ground" to help spread the word and educate our membership and fellow community members, and acquaintances (friends and families) on specific political implications such as, future rulings of Supreme Court cases and their impacts to public education with regards to educators, our students, and unions. Our current efforts are focused on educating the public about the Constitutional Convention and its impacts – VOTING NO on the back of the November 7th ballot.

Please remember that anyone can participate and help with the IOC and GNTA by volunteering to assist its representatives and/or by participating in the MEG. Reach out to your representatives in your buildings and by checking the GNTA website for updates on future endeavors that include more activities for our membership. Stay tuned…

New Third Party Administrator for the GNTA Benefit Trust Fund

by Maura Carroll, Benefit Trust Fund Trustee

Effective November 1, 2017, The Preferred Group will be the new third party administrator for the GNTA Benefit Trust Fund. The ONLY thing that changes is where you send your claim forms. There will no NO changes to your existing benefits, and your preferred dentists, et al, will remain the same. Any claims that have been previously sent to D.H. Cook will be processed; after November 1, they will be forwarded to The Preferred Group. IF your provider sends in your claim form, YOU need to tell them of the change in provider and new address.

This is the new address to mail your claim forms:

The Preferred Group
PO Box 15136
Albany, NY 12212

Phone (866) 989-8997
Fax - (518) 591-4965
www.MYTPGPLAN.com

The new forms are currently available for download at gnteachers.net. If you have any questions, call Monica Martin at the Cottage at (516) 829-9086.

VISIT US ONLINE AT GNTEACHERS.NET

Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, Nov 2

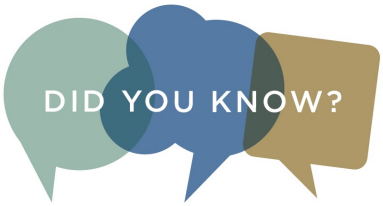
NYSTRS Convention
Nov 5-6

Election Day
VOTE NO!!!
Tuesday, November 7

Veterans Day
Schools Closed
Friday, November 10

ED 19
Tuesday, Nov 28

Delegate Assembly Meeting
Wednesday, November 29



You do **NOT** have to share the nature of your first two personal day requests with admin unless they fall on or next to a vacation or holiday weekend. After your first two personal days, you may submit additional personal day requests, which, if approved, will come from your sick bank. In these cases, you must share the reasoning with the Superintendent of Schools.