Eden Jr./Sr. High School is proud to present “The Wedding Singer” as the 2014 musical. This fun musical is loosely based on the movie “The Wedding Singer” that starred Adam Sandler. We will be performing the high school edited version which makes it more appropriate for younger audiences. Catchy tunes, big laughs, 80s references, and a sweet love story evolve through this musical.

Show dates are as follows:
- Thursday, March 6 at 7 pm
- Friday, March 7 at 7:30 pm
- Saturday, March 8 at 7:30 pm
- Sunday, March 9 at 2 pm

Tickets can be purchased through Showtix4U.com.

For further information, contact Sue Schnaufer or Jen Tylock.

New Teacher Feature: Morgan Theophilus, Eden Elementary

Morgan Theophilus may have a familiar face to many; she was Morgan Prentice, until she was married this summer! Morgan grew up in Ellicottville next to her grandparents’ farm, making her transition to working in Eden an easy one. After spending summers with her aunt setting up her classroom, Morgan dreamed of having her own classroom one day. After graduating from Ellicottville, Morgan enrolled at SUNY Fredonia where she majored in Childhood Inclusive Education. She earned her bachelor’s degree and decided to stay at Fredonia for one more year to complete her Master’s in Curriculum & Instruction. Morgan began substitute teaching at Eden as soon as she was certified. She began as a day-to-day substitute, but she soon had long-term subbing positions. Morgan has been a part of our Eden family for a few years, but was hired as a full time fifth grade teacher this summer. She is cooperatively teaching in a new fifth grade inclusive classroom program. We are so lucky to have such a passionate, hard working teacher in our district!
General Meetings & Events

March 10—General Meeting @ High School, Room 124*  
April 7 - General Meeting @ JPs  
May 5 - General Meeting @ Elementary Bldg. Room 208  
May 28—NYSUT Awards Dinner at Salvatore’s Italian Garden  
June 2 - General Meeting @ JPs  
June 6 - Awards & Retirement Dinner at Templeton Landing  

*DATE CHANGE: The ETA meeting scheduled for March 3 has been changed to March 10.

ETA Officers 2013-14

President: Colleen Kot, 2015  
Vice President: Mark Vona, 2015  
Treasurer: Laura Feasley, 2015  
Secretary: Terri Blasz, 2015

GLP Reps

Linda Schwanz, Head Rep, 2015  
Carol King, 2014  
Colleen Griffin, 2014

Main Street Reps

Judy Maynard, Head Rep, 2014  
Lorry Malkowski, 2014  
Amy Witman, 2015  
Kevin Witman, 2015

Jr./Sr. High Reps

Paula Farrell, Head Rep, 2014  
Susan Gianiodis, 2015  
Carrie Hamlet, 2014  
Steve Jones, 2015  
Keith Kwas, 2015  
Lynn Morgan, 2015  
Phil Archabald, 2014

TOGETHER is the official newsletter of the Eden Teacher’s Association and is published bimonthly.  

Submissions are subject to editorial review and may be edited for clarity and length. Submission of articles and suggestions for this publication can be transmitted through ETA building reps. or via e-mail at: JRamaekers@edencsd.wnyric.org

Any information that needs to be communicated in a more timely fashion should be featured on our Website. To place information on the website contact Webmaster Lorry Malkowski
A special thank you goes to the volunteers that gave their Saturday night to help this event run flawlessly. So thank you to: Jill Rapp, Katherine LaVerdi, Colleen Griffin, Katie Mathis, Sandi Ploetz, Carol King, Chris Archabald, and Abby Ploetz.

Also, thank you to all of the members of the ETA. Of the $1,500 we raised, approximately $1,000 came from the raffle ticket sales for the auction baskets. Your generosity in donating such great theme baskets made this event successful!

The 8th Annual ETA Family Movie Night was another success despite the inclement weather. Through the auction tickets, movie tickets, and concession sales the ETA was able to raise over $1,500 to support the services the Boys and Girls Club provides to our district’s children.

Where We Stand
We will defend public education. Period. We will not be silent while our critics distort the success of New York State public education to make it appear to be a failure.

We bring experience. We bring you many years of leadership in education, labor, coalition building, advocating social justice and the ability to accept and bring forward new ideas in these troubled times.

We do not support the Common Core as it is.

We do not support Iannuzzi’s APPR or the way it was created.

We are not afraid of the Commissioner of Education and Regents. A failure to listen to parents and teachers, cancelation of forums and a blind push for implementation that hurts both teachers and administrators should not be greeted with a timid response.

Our stance on Governor Cuomo. Please visit this website for information regarding this topic. http://revivenysut.org/where-we-stand/

We are for Transparency. Have you ever seen the NYSUT financials?

The tax cap was a terrible mistake. NYSUT waiting almost two full years, just two days prior to the expiration date, to file a lawsuit was irresponsible at best and did great harm. We will fight to get rid of the tax cap completely.

Opt out. REVIVE supports a parents’ right to opt out of unnecessary state tests.

Social justice to bring real change. We will continue to establish REAL coalitions, not only in name but instead in action.

We support NYSUT Constituency Groups. We support ALL NYSUT members.

For more information about the candidates and their position and vision for NYSUT moving forward, please visit: http://revivenysut.org/meet-the-candidates/

For more information on the current leadership, Under Dick Iannuzzi and Maria Neira (Vice President), please visit: http://www.strongernysut.com/the-movement.html

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy McConeghy-Witman
Lorry's Links

170 Online Ebooks for Young Kids
This site uses web mixes to group various free eBooks found all over the web. Options include Read to Me stories, National Geographics for Kids, Starfall books, and more. Choose any of the links to view the Symbaloo project. Then pick any story to begin.  http://mattbgomez.com/170-online-ebooks-for-young-kids/

STEM Behind Hollywood
From zombies and superheroes to crime drama and space, Hollywood’s blockbuster genres rely on real-world science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to bring the magic to life on the big screen.

STEM Behind Hollywood is an exciting new program created by TI with the assistance of the Science & Entertainment Exchange, a program of the National Academy of Sciences, to get students excited about STEM education and careers.

Writers Speak to Kids
Learn about the craft and techniques of writing straight from real authors in this series of videos at NBC Learn. Choose from 17 short videos, each less than 5 minutes, focusing on a specific craft such as writing poetry, sources for inspiration, and the writing process. Each video includes a transcript of the author's conversation. The authors write popular books for a variety of age ranges.
http://www.nbclearn.com/portal/site/learn/writers-speak-to-kids

New York State Teachers’ Retirement System
No matter how long you have been teaching, make sure you visit the NYSTRS website and set up a MyNYSTRS account. No matter how far along you are in your career, careful financial and retirement planning are critical.
http://www.nystrs.org/

These and many more links are found on our website – www.etaunion.org

Lorry
Many retirees wish they began focusing on financial and retirement planning much earlier in their lives. The truth is: No matter how far along you are in your career, careful financial and retirement planning are critical.

NYSTRS’ Pension & Retirement Education Program (PREP) is designed to help members of all ages prepare for retirement. PREP is structured to allow you to tailor the program to fit your needs. Stay for the entire seminar or just the modules below that would be of greatest significance to you:

- **NYSTRS Benefits**: Your pension, death benefits, and disability coverage. (8:45-9:45 a.m.)
- **Financial Planning**: Tax-deferred investments – starting early and catching up later. (10-10:45 a.m.)
- **Social Security**: Benefits, eligibility rules, and collecting ASAP or at "normal" retirement age. (10:45-11:15 a.m.)
- **Estate Planning**: Wills, trusts, powers of attorney, health care proxies, and living wills. (11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)
- **Retirement—A New Beginning**: Planning ahead, staying active and healthy, and relocating. (1:30-2:30 p.m.)
- **Filing for Retirement**: Resigning vs. retiring, choosing a retirement date, and benefit payment options. (2:40-3:15 p.m.)
- **Retirement Income**: Monthly benefit payments, cost-of-living adjustments, and working in retirement. (3:15-3:30 p.m.)

Seminars are held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with registration beginning at 8 a.m. There is no fee to attend and your spouse/companion is welcome to attend, but you must make a reservation in advance. These seminars are not designed for individual retirement counseling.

There are two ways to make a reservation:

1. Online using the MyNYSTRS account. After logging into your account, select the "My Tools" tab and then "Schedule Appointments."
2. By calling NYSTRS at (800) 356-3128, Ext. 6180 weekdays - 8:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m.

You’ll need to provide your: NYSTRS EmplID or Social Security number & date of birth, home address and telephone number. You’ll need to bring your most-recent Benefit Profile to the seminar.

For the most up-to-date estimate of your retirement benefits, use the online [MyNYSTRS Pension Estimator](#). This tool allows you to create estimates using various retirement dates.
On February 3, 2014, Dick Iannuzzi, New York State United Teachers President, stated, “We will vigorously defend any NYSUT member who are subject to any negative employment considerations for choosing to opt out their own children or who advocate to the extent permitted by law, for others who opt out of state standardized tests.”

Some of the comments made are as follows:

- NYSUT strongly condemns “sit & stare” policies...
- “it would be spiteful and counterproductive for any school district to require an administrator or teacher to direct a child to ‘sit and stare’ at a blank desk while other students are taking exams because of a choice made by a parent.”
- “punishing or embarrassing children because their parents exercised their right to choose not to have children participate in tests they consider to be inappropriate, is, frankly, abusive.”

Christmas Card from the Boys & Girls Club

To read this article in full, click on the link below:
Are you looking to book that incredible vacation you’ve always dreamed about, map out that important business trip you need to take or rent a vehicle for an upcoming excursion?

NYSUT Member Benefits offers a variety of endorsed discount travel programs that allow you to do each of these while saving money at the same time!

**Travelzoo**

Save up to 65% at top restaurants, luxury spas, museums, and other locations with one of the newest NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed programs -- Travelzoo.

Travelzoo also offers getaways that include stays at the finest inns, hotels and resorts across the U.S. combined with exclusive hotel perks and amenities to give guests an added bonus to complete their stay. Please note that many of these deals are offered for a limited period of time.

**Grand Circle Corporation**

One of our newest Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed programs is provided by Grand Circle Corporation, which offers a variety of group tour vacations designed specifically for American travelers over 50 years old.

Grand Circle Corporation -- which includes Grand Circle Travel, the award-winning Grand Circle Cruise Line, Overseas Adventure Travel, and Grand Circle Small Ship Cruises -- is committed to providing international travel, adventure and discovery opportunities that offer impactful and intercultural experiences.

NYSUT members & their family members can either save $100 per person on their trip or travel for free if they gather at least 10 paying travelers for a group tour.

**Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals**

If you’re on the hunt for savings, look no further than the NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed travel program offered by Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals.

NYSUT members enjoy savings of up to 20% at nearly 7,000 participating hotels among 17 hotel brands with Wyndham Worldwide and savings of 25% at more than 200,000 vacation rentals in 100 countries with Endless Vacation Rentals.

Wyndham Hotels has the right hotel for you at the right price -- whether it’s an upscale hotel, all-inclusive resort or something more cost-effective.

With Endless Vacation Rentals, NYSUT members can save on beautiful resort condos, villas, homes, and cottages that provide space and flexibility ideal for families and groups of friends traveling together.

**Car & Truck Rentals**

Do you need to rent a vehicle as part of your next trip? NYSUT members can get discounted rates on passenger car rentals with the following companies: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National. You can also receive 20% off local or one-way truck rentals from Budget Truck Rental.

Learn more about these endorsed programs -- including how to access discounts, unique website codes and website links -- by contacting Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org.
The budget process is upon us once again. The state continues to put school districts in a position by imposing the tax cap, limiting additional aid, and now giving tax payers a break if the district stays at or below the tax cap and combines services with other districts.

The lines of communication between the ETA and the administrators are better now than they have been in the past. We have a representative on the budget advisory committee and building principals have solicited our input.

During the next couple of months, it is extremely important that we stand united and act in solidarity.

Meanwhile, NYSUT has been dealing with some internal conflict. UFT to trying to advance its control over our state affiliate, resulting in an election for NYSUT officers at this year’s Representative Assembly. I have our political action committee (Amy McConeghy-Witman, Annette Bahun, and Mark Vona) gathering information on the candidates so we can make an informed decision on who we should vote for. Campaign information can be found at strongernysut.com.

Thanks to all of our members for supporting VOTECOPE. We currently average $107.10/member. This speaks volumes of our members understanding the importance of political action and the vital role it plays in our professional life. As demands continue to be placed on our profession and the never ending attacks on unions, your voluntary contributions helps advocate for the issues and legislation that are crucial to our profession.

NYSUT continues to hold Albany accountable. The NYSUT Board of Directors convened January 24-25, 2014 in Albany where they acted unanimously to approve a resolution that declared “no confidence” in the policies of State Education Commissioner John King Jr., calling for his removal by the Board of Regents. The Board also withdrew its support for the Common Core Standards as implemented and interpreted in NYS until SED makes major course corrections to its failed implementation plan and supports a three-year moratorium on high-stakes consequences from standardized testing.

Please stay informed and THINK SPRING!!!!!!

Colleen Kot