TOGETHER

Eden Teachers Association - March/April

ECTC UPDATE

Summer is fast approaching and that means another chance at applying for 5 ipads to have in your room for THREE years through the Erie-Catt Teacher Center. The link is not up yet but should be up in May. How do you see yourself using them in the class? How can you enhance your current instruction having access to them all day long? There have 10 Eden teachers selected to participate in the program since it started. You can look at the website to see who has used or is currently using them if you want to talk about the program.

Summer courses will be released sometime in May as well. Please remember to carefully check the course dates with your personal calendar before committing to it. If you come to a conflict, just let Cathie Marriott know as soon as you can.

Interested in National Board Certification?

The ECTC runs a support group for teachers going through the process.

If you are looking for a rigorous, but extremely worthwhile professional development opportunity - this may be for you! PLUS, we now have a $1,500 stipend in our contract! An awareness session will take place on June 7th from 4-5pm at the teacher center.

[Brand Logos]

National Board Council of New York State
NYSUT has begun to concentrate their efforts on preventing a New York State Constitutional Convention from taking place later in the year.

Quick history lesson: State constitutions can be changed two ways:
1. Individual bills pass both houses of the NYS Legislature and are proposed to voters on the November ballot. These bills only need 50% +1 vote to become a new amendment.
   1. Example: Casino gambling in 2013—PASSED
2. Every 20 years, electing to open a Constitutional Convention where the entire document can be transformed.

On November 7, 2017, New York State law requires that all eligible voters decided whether or not to open up a Constitutional Convention. 75% of polled New Yorkers have never even heard of a Constitutional Convention! As a member of NYSUT and the ETA (and a public employee), here is why you should vote “NO” on November 7, 2017 (and encourage others to do the same):

- The NYS Constitution establishes the fundamental rights enjoyed by public employees—both current and retired, including, but not limited to:
  - Guaranteeing the right to a free public education
  - Prohibiting reductions in public pensions benefits
  - Rights to workers compensation
  - Rights to be a member of a union and bargain collectively
  - Requiring that NY provide for social welfare needs
  - Basic environmental protections, including land for Adirondacks State Park

What consequences could come from an open Constitutional Convention? Below are some very real possibilities:
- All public employees would automatically move to Tier 6 (for the pension system)
- Retirement age adjusted to 62 or higher
- Increase payment 6%—or more—of your salary into the pension system, for your entire career.
- NO ONE would be “grandfathered”—retirees are not safe from losing their benefits!

What happened in Wisconsin? An open Constitutional Convention led to...
- Limited collective bargaining
- Contracts limited to one year—wages are frozen until the new contract is settled
- Collective bargaining units are required to take annual votes to maintain certification as a union
- Employers are prohibited from collecting union dues
- All state employees pay a minimum 12.6% of their healthcare premium

Folks, 2017 is an “odd” election year (no major national elections will be held); therefore, 2017 is expected to be a LOW voter turnout year. Please encourage your family, friends and neighbors to vote NO on November 7. These changes affect all public employees of New York—not only educators.
School Renovation and Construction: What you Need to Know to Protect Child and Adult Environmental Health

For more information visit www.Healthyschools.org

Hazards to Children During Renovation and Construction
Schools must provide a healthful, safe learning environment which promotes attendance and achievement. Construction and renovation projects conducted while school is in session severely test this responsibility and often present unnecessary risks to children and staff. Some environmental hazards that can occur during school renovation and construction include:

- Lead-contaminated debris
- Asbestos fibers and fiberglass
- Wood, sheet rock, cement dust, and dust contaminated with lead/asbestos/molds
- Fumes from construction equipment (diesel fuel from heavy machinery)
- Fumes from toxic products (paints, sealers, glues, varnishes or urethanes, roofing tar)
- Excessive, loud noises
- Fumes from new furnishings and equipment (copiers, carpets, new particle board or plywood)
- Specifically, these materials can include materials which are known to harmful to human health, including children's health: Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) (glues, paints, floor finishes, other construction materials)
  1. Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs) (materials with halogenated flame retardants, including foams and finishes)
    1. Polyvinyl chloride (PVCs) plastics (flooring, plumbing, wall coverings and partitions)
  2. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) (caulk and fluorescent light ballasts, typically in older buildings constructed or renovated from the 1950's through 1978)
  3. Lead (paint in schools constructed or renovated before 1978, soil); the US Environmental Protection Agency enforces the Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule, which requires that contractors be certified in lead-safe work practices before renovating, repairing or painting schools, daycares or homes where lead paint will be disturbed; contractors are also required to take steps to minimize the exposure of occupants to lead-contaminated dust by containing the work area, using methods that produce the least amount of dust, and thoroughly cleaning the area after the work is finished
  4. Mold (ceiling tiles, drywall, carpets, carpet pads and other building materials)

School occupants at higher risk for health problems include all children, pregnant women and those with chronic illnesses or impaired immune systems.

Children's Health is Affected by Their Environment
Today, children are growing up with complex toxic environmental threats to health ranging from asthma-inducing air pollution to toxic chemicals. Children are not just little adults and are especially vulnerable to environmental risks because:

- Their bodies are still developing
- They proportionately eat, drink and breathe more per pound of weight than adults
- They are less able to identify or protect themselves from exposures to environmental hazards.
UNDERSTANDING YOUR NYSTRS MEMBERSHIP

Visiting the website at NYSTRS.org is the best way to get the latest information on legislation and news related to your benefits. You can also find publications in the Library and print System forms. With a MyNYSTRS account, you can: access your personal membership information; view your annual Benefit Profile; sign up for e-newsletters; apply for prior service; change your address; apply for a loan; register for the Pension & Retirement Education Program (PREP); use the Pension Estimator to project retirement benefits; and, make an appointment for a benefits consultation.

As an important part of your retirement planning, you should meet with a NYSTRS representative who can answer your pension questions and provide you with printed benefit estimates. These individual benefit consultations are held at various locations throughout the state (either by meeting with NYSTRS staff in person or through a video conference). Consultation schedules are provided on the Benefits Consultations page of NYSTRS website. You can book a consultation online through the MyNYSTRS area of the website at NYSTRS.org, or by calling NYSTRS at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6100.

PLEASE JOIN US!

**Adopt-A-Highway**

**WHEN**
Wednesday, May 24th, 3:30pm

**WHERE**
8557 North Main Street
Eden, NY

**MORE INFORMATION**
Meet your fellow union colleagues to help clean up the community! Our two-mile stretch has changed, and should make our job easier! Email Amy Steger or Morgan Theophilus to RSVP.

**Retirement Dinner at Pearl Street Brewery**

**WHEN**
Thursday, June 8th, 5pm

**WHERE**
76 Pearl Street
Buffalo, NY

**MORE INFORMATION**
Please be on the lookout for Award nominations! They will be due to Michelle Berne on May 12th.
**Science Lives Here**

Learn about science, engineering, and the natural world with this large variety of Interactive games. Scroll through to view all game topics, or use the drop-down box to limit your search by subject. Content offers a broad range of choices including animals, genetics, and space.

[http://www.rlgb.org/education/games](http://www.rlgb.org/education/games)

**2 Minute Geology**

2 Minute Geology is a YouTube playlist featuring short, informative videos discussing geological features from around the world. Topics include petrified wood, the Seattle earthquake fault, and more.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMbsGHVzXRU&list=PLnsGtwpP24oZn7_heum8QNYKsYXbeApp](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMbsGHVzXRU&list=PLnsGtwpP24oZn7_heum8QNYKsYXbeApp)

**ClassHook**

ClassHook uses favorite TV shows and movies to teach classroom content in engaging and relevant ways. Students naturally relate to popular media, making ClassHook a natural learning tool to help students relate to concepts beyond a textbook. Find content by using the keyword search or browse by topic. Search by Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, or Business. Create an account using your email to gain full access to ClassHook’s library of clips.

[https://www.classhook.com/](https://www.classhook.com/)

**My Physics Lab**

Discover a large variety of physics simulations and interactives at My Physics Lab. Each simulation also includes an explanation of the math and physics involved. Also, check out the How Does It Work? section of the site for help with the simulations and information on the math and software involved.

Simplifying your life insurance options

As an educated consumer, you realize the earlier in life that you purchase life insurance, the cheaper the premiums will likely be. You’re also aware that life insurance offers financial protection for your dependents upon your death, helping to cover the costs of funeral and burial expenses; assistance to help with your children’s education; and offering financial assistance with paying debts and other expenses.

It can be overwhelming, though, trying to determine the best type of life insurance policy. Let’s take a look at some of the different types of life insurance options available.

**#1: Whole Life Insurance** – This type of insurance is usually the most costly since policies are guaranteed to remain in force as long as premiums are paid. Whole life insurance offers permanent protection with premiums that never increase and builds cash value you can borrow against while you are living (like a loan). *Important:* Understand that you will reduce your death benefit if you don’t repay loans with interest and will no longer have coverage if you surrender the policy.

**#2: Term Life Insurance** – This type of insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specified term, offering a fixed rate of payments during that time period. Once that period ends, coverage at the previous premium rate is not guaranteed and the insured would need to get further coverage. Term life insurance (and its level term life cousin) is designed only to protect your dependents if you were to die prematurely -- offering NO cash value.

**#3: Level Term Life Insurance** – Like term life insurance, level term life insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specific time period. Premiums may not be increased during the time period due to change in your age or health status.

**#4: Universal Life Insurance** – This type of insurance offers a way to protect your dependents while building tax-deferred cash value. While the cost of a universal life plan needs to be covered so the policy remains in force, the policyholder has the option to adjust how much he or she will pay in premiums each year. Policyholders can also access a portion of the balance without affecting the guaranteed death benefit as the cash value accumulates over time.

Keep in mind that NYSUT members & their spouses/certified domestic partners can help protect their dependents from life’s uncertainties with a variety of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed life insurance plans. Many of these plans offer group rates not available to the general public along with additional convenience and savings opportunities.

For more information about these plans, visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.
Card #1: It's just not necessary

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:
It's just not necessary
why in five

1. A process already exists to amend the state constitution, and it doesn’t cost a thing.
2. For example, the state Legislature passed an amendment in 2013 expanding casino gambling. The same process could be used for new amendments.
3. Opening the state constitution is like opening Pandora’s Box. You can’t predict what changes delegates will make.
4. The last time a convention took place it was a complete failure; voters rejected every proposed constitutional change.
5. Don’t add to Albany waste. Vote NO!
Card #2: Labor rights at risk

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:
Labor rights at risk

why in five

1. At risk: The right to unionize and bargain collectively. Your union's strength could be jeopardized.

2. At risk: Workers' compensation. Safeguard your rights if you're injured on the job.

3. At risk: Public pension protections. The constitution guarantees your pension will be there.

4. Other states have made drastic pension changes with disastrous results for active members and retirees. Don't let it happen here!

5. Don't risk your rights/your future. Vote NO!
Card #4: What’s at stake?

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: What’s at stake?

why in five

1. The environment — New York State’s constitution has the nation’s strongest protections for forever wild areas like the Adirondacks and the Catskills. Greedy developers could push to undo these safeguards.

2. Public education — The state constitution guarantees our students the right to a free public education.

3. The social safety net — The state constitution ensures the state provides for citizens in need.

4. Our voting rights — The constitution provides valuable protections.

5. Don’t risk losing these vital safeguards. Vote NO!
Card #5: A Politicians’ Convention

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: A Politicians’ Convention

why in five

1. During the last convention, four out of five delegates were career politicians and Albany insiders.
2. And every politician who ran for a delegate seat that year, won a delegate seat.
3. And who ran the show? All of the convention leaders were sitting legislators.
4. Most troubling? Thanks to Citizens United, corporate special interests can spend unlimited money getting their cronies elected.
5. Do you trust Albany insiders to do what’s right? Don’t risk it. Vote NO!
Card #3: A waste of tax dollars

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:
A waste of tax dollars

why in five

1. Experts estimate a constitutional convention will cost hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars.
2. Lawmakers can collect salaries and pension credits as elected officials and as delegates simultaneously.
3. The last time a constitutional convention took place, it cost taxpayers millions and accomplished nothing.
4. Constitutional conventions don’t have mandatory end dates — delegates keep meeting and taxpayers keep paying.
5. Should taxpayers fund a party for Albany insiders? No! Vote NO!
THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG UNION

In 1967, the Public Employees' Fair Employment Act "Taylor Law" was passed. This law gave educators the right to organize and bargain for the teachers in their union, but prohibits them from striking. In 1982, Triborough was added to the Taylor Law, which allows the terms of an expired agreement (contract) to remain in full force. Governor Cuomo would like to see this go away. Without a union, there is no freedom of speech, no freedom of the press, and you are guilty until proven innocent. We cannot allow tenure (which guarantees us due process before being fired) to be abolished. The strength of the ETA will be as strong as our members make it. An informed member knows the role of the union and what it can do for its members. It is never too late to get involved. Don't wait until you need the union, the union NEEDS YOU! You are the eyes and ears of the union. If something doesn't seem or sound right, check it out to prevent it from becoming a possible problem.

It is the duty of the union to represent its members and that means ALL of its members. Concerns should be brought to your building rep. If it appears that it is a contractual issue (possible grievance), please familiarize yourself with the timelines for filing. If your building rep has questions, please share your concerns with the head building rep, who will decide where it should go from there. It is YOUR responsibility to keep track of your appointment date and that you are teaching at least .40 in your tenure area (HS teachers only). Take the time to attend a BOE meeting or check the minutes that are posted on the district web page.

Upcoming events: NYSUT Awards Dinner on May 25th honoring Kevin Witman, Budget Vote on May 16th, VOTE COPE drive and Happy Hour (TBD) and the retirement dinner on June 8th.

Colleen Kot