

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE IN THE WEST TO THE LIGHTHOUSE IN THE EAST



THE BEACON

BOCES EDUCATORS OF EASTERN SUFFOLK, UNION LOCAL 3037

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THELMA SHAW



Volume 21,
Issue 1
October 2007

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Welcome back, I hope that each and every member had an enjoyable and relaxing summer.

This summer brought about many changes and moves in some of our buildings and I hope that everyone has settled into their buildings and classroom routines. Please take the time to find out who your respective building representative is and how to contact them. Remember, the building representative is the first link in our chain of command. Introduce yourself if you are new to the building or if your representative is new to your building. Getting to know your building representative is beneficial should you need him or her to represent you at a meeting or just have a question or concern to discuss with him or her. One of my favorite mantras has become, "When in doubt, reach out." It is much easier to reach a solution or resolve issues before they spin out of control.

The school year of 2007 – 2008 promises to be a busy year. NCLC will be moving over to BRAC, BRAC will be moving to JAC, thus becoming one program. Along with all the other day to day concerns that come along, the blue contract expires in June 2008 and hasn't been opened up for full negotiations in almost 13 years. As per our Constitution guidelines, we have already established a negotiating team and are in the process of reviewing the surveys that were handed out and returned.

As a membership we are facing difficult times, some of our programs are experiencing a decrease in student population. The pressure that is put on our students to learn and know more is placing a demand on all of our staff to raise achievement and continually "do better" and "be creative." This in turn places pressure on all of our staff members, because we are all intertwined and it is up to all of us, whether a Teacher, Para Educator or Support Staff to make sure that our students have a happy and positive school experience. We have the responsibility

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

to provide all of our students with the skills that they need to be successful when they leave us. In addition to those skills we need to engage them and stir the passion within them to want to learn and continue to hunger for more knowledge. Our students deserve a bright future; all of us here at BOCES have the opportunity in one way or another to ensure that they get what they deserve.

I am PROUD to say that I am a BOCES graduate.

I graduated in 1972 from the BOCES LPN program and have continued to maintain my license and work in the field on and off for the past 30 years. The enthusiasm, professionalism, creativity, energy and passion that I felt in that classroom then, I still experience in the classrooms today as I visit our programs. My two instructors, Irene Grey and Joy Bausman gave me the foundation and education that has stayed with me all of these years. I look back on the education I received and realize how valuable it was then and how valuable it is to our students now. My life was forever changed and now I have the opportunity, as do all of us, to "Change a life."

Back in those days, BOCES was the only "GAME" in town; one didn't have to worry about competition from other districts or the potential threat of Technical Institutes for high school students. This safety net no longer exists; we must be and continue to be the "Best we can be" for our students. Not only is that first day so very important, but each and every day afterwards is equally just as important. Remember, if our students are not challenged or their parents feel that they aren't being challenged, they may stop coming and seek alternate schooling. They have choices, we as educators must make them CHOOSE us as their first and only choice.

This doesn't just apply to our Career and Technical/Special Career students, but to our Special Education population as well. Districts are continually developing programs for our Special Education students with the concept of "bringing them back" and as we saw upstate in Albany, Charter Schools are becoming another option for some of our student population. Surveys have shown that students will come to school when they are excited about learning, inspired by their classroom staff and feel that they being challenged. Adopting this philosophy will yield substantial future benefits for all of us, increased enrollments, fewer dropped students and positive student outcomes.

This summer Governor Spitzer signed a bill into law which created a permanent School Related Professionals Recognition Day. Previous SRP Days were signed on a year to year basis. SRP Recognition Day will now fall yearly on the third Tuesday of each November. This year, SRP Day will be celebrated on November 20, 2007. SRP day recognizes bus drivers, school nurses, custodians, secretaries, food service workers, teaching assistants and aides.

NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue refers to the SRPs as,
"the hidden heroes of our schools."

It is truly overdue that the daily contributions that occur in any school on any given day of the week by any of the above SRPs be honored annually. Congratulations to all of the SRPs and our own Para Educators.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

On July 23, the IRS released new 403B regulations which become effective January 2009. We are currently researching how these new regulations affect our 403B plans and will keep the members updated as we receive information. In addition to this change, IRS Code 409A will be changing. This code addresses the 10 month versus 12 month salary otherwise known as the 21 paychecks or 26 paychecks.

I have been in contact with NYSUT and BOCES about these changes. While we are still in the discovery stage, one thing that is important for our membership to know is that everything is fine for this school year. It appears that the extra taxation does not apply to our membership. We will be continuing our research and will keep our membership informed as we get the information. **Please do not call payroll or human resources for information as they are working in collaboration with the union and have the same information that the union is giving the membership.**

In addition to the above, it was also discovered this summer that the Teacher Retirement System and the Employee Retirement System no longer allow the use of any sick day sell back for the purpose of acquiring either service credit or to be used in calculating the final average salaries for members regardless of what tier they may be in. This is known as Terminal Leave, which means receiving your payout during the course of a school year. I am in receipt of a letter from Ted Todorov, NYSTRS, where he explains that this practice will no longer be allowed. We have been in contact with our NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, Vinny Lyons, who, after much research and investigating a court case, Kelly vs. the TRS (1979), concurred that no longer will any member be able to use the option 1, page 14, of the blue contract to receive payment for the terminal leave over an extended period of time and use that time/salary for service credit and final average salary. (This option was only available to members hired prior to Feb. 1, 1980)

This DOES NOT impact members who need to use their sick time for medical purposes and may be out for an extended period of time; members in this situation will continue to accrue their time for as long as they have sick days. BOCES will no longer report to either the TRS or the ERS a member as "active" if they elect to use the option 1 Terminal Leave benefit. Thank you to Michael Locantore who, in collaboration with the union, ensured that not one of the 5 members who had already requested and were granted the Terminal Leave option were harmed in anyway. Not one member was denied the right to return back to their previous assignment. The above doesn't apply to any Tier 1a members who are allowed to use their lump sum payout as part of their calculation for their 5 year Final Average Salary; this remains the same and hasn't changed.

As I enter my 2nd year as President of the BEES, I want to reaffirm my commitment to our membership and wish everyone a **GREAT AND REWARDING** school year. Coming together last year was a beginning for all of us, keeping together is progress and working together is success. **Let's be Successful.**



EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Pat Copertino & Dominic Savio



Welcome back BEES members. Are you interested in a great book?

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears, by Verna Aardema, is an outstanding Caldecott award winning African tale which explains how it came to be that those small creatures chatter around our heads. Through the cumulative format of the narrative, you witness how some tiny bit of misinformation and compounding miscommunication spark, and then ignite a chain of actions and panic throughout this animal community. Inadvertently, a tragedy occurs causing the flow of natural events to stop working effectively or at all. In the case of this myth, the sun stopped rising. Eventually the animals uncovered how the calamity really happened and the sun could shine again.

We bring this myth to you as a reflection of past events and a reminder for future concerns. The reflection is from the recent past when misinformation and misunderstanding about certification, seniority and fair practices for involuntary transfers caused panic and anger among members. As in the story, blame is cast without evidence or merit, only to be followed up with investigation and the lengthy clean up process.

BOCES is an organization of *change*. Whether that change is self-imposed to improve services for our component districts or in concert with their needs, *flexibility* has always been required. We recognize that dealing with change is not the same for all and as your union leaders we accept our role in helping members effectively and fairly make the transition. It is our mission to supply you with **accurate** information based on research and fair practices. With that said, we ask that you, once again use the chain of command.

Members are welcome and encouraged to bring **Union** concerns to their representative. If the representative requires clarification please grant them the time and respect to check with their (and your) Area Vice President. The Area Vice President will contact us if needed. We consult with the President, Vincent Lyons our Labor Relations Specialists, NYSUT Legal and the State Department. **No "shooting from the hip!"** If something discussed in the staff room or parking lot does not sound quite right, check into it before becoming a part of the sequence of unfortunate events.

Intentionally, we told you about the African myth, but not the tale itself.
Take the book, 10 minutes with a child, a group or just yourself
and do what you do so well.....educate!

Have a great school year.

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT Ray Stenberg

POLITICAL ACTION, POLITICAL ACTION, POLITICAL ACTION! It seems that's all I've been thinking about lately. There is a lot going on right now which will definitely have either positive or negative impacts on public education and unions in New York State and throughout the country. Issues such as No Child Left Behind and the National Labor Relations Board Kentucky River Decision have had significant impacts on our public schools and labor unions throughout the country. On September 28th and 29th, I had the opportunity to meet with other BOCES union representatives from throughout the state. Their issues are very similar to ours in both CTE and Special Ed. We are all struggling to meet the poorly funded demands of NCLB and help our students succeed. It is crucial that we all take 5 minutes out of our day sometime this week and send letters to our elected officials on the federal and state levels. I remember back when I first started for BOCES and we had those infamous letter writing campaigns after school. You had to hand write the letters, fill out the envelopes, and lick the stamps. People did it, but it was a rather tedious task. With technology improving everyday, this process has become extremely easy. So please take a few minutes and do the following:

- 1) Go to your home computer and log onto www.nysut.org.
- 2) On the left hand side of the home page click on "legislative action center".
- 3) You will now be on the contact your elected officials page where you can follow the 5 simple directions on how to send letters.

I'm serious folks- It's simple and quick. A few clicks of the mouse and the letters will be automatically faxed to the politicians. Let's flood them with letters so that they know how serious we are about these issues. Remember, they need us on Election Day.

Our state and federal unions want our support on two major issues: NCLB and the Kentucky River decision. Please "preview" both letters before you send them so that you can see how vital they are. In addition, there are many other issues that may apply to you on a personal level. You can send up to three letters per day so if time permits over the next few weeks, log onto the NYSUT website and do it again.

Examples of letters include the **55/25 legislation for Tiers II, III, and IV, permanent health insurance moratorium for all retirees, permanent COLA for retirees, support for School-Related Professionals within NCLB, and retirement credit for those of us who have overpaid** into the retirement system. I'm sure that there are particular letters which have a direct impact on you and your future. On November 5th and 6th, I will be attending the annual NY State Teacher's Retirement Conference where I will actively lobby for the major retirement issues that impact our members. My next Beacon article will address the outcome of this meeting. Remember, your issues are my issues!

Soon your building representatives will be coming around to remind you about VOTE COPE. If you have not yet signed up for the one time per year payroll deduction, see your rep for the forms. If you are interested in becoming part of our local political action team, you can either call me at BAC @ Eastport (878-6084) or send an e-mail to raystenberg@hotmail.com I hope that you all have a successful and productive school year. Before you know it, we'll be at the Westlake in Patchogue honoring our retirees.



Welcome Back!! It is hard to believe it is already October.. As you know we started the school year with our new contract in effect and I want to thank all of you for your patience and support. At present our contract is being proofed by Administration, several E-Board members as well as our NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist. It will then be printed and distributed. This may take some time.

One change has been that we can now take our 4 personal days without reason. Only 2 may be used in conjunction with a holiday or long weekend. If the third or fourth personal days are used in conjunction with a holiday or long weekend, documentation must be provided. If a sick day is taken in conjunction with a personal day(s), which are taken with a holiday or long weekend, a physician's note will be required. I am presently working with Human Resources to develop a new form to report these days, until then send a memo, 24 hours in advance, to your principal requesting your personal day(s).

With the start of a new year I think this is a good time to clarify our roles within the classroom. To alleviate any confusion, classroom teacher aide or individual aide is a job assignment. Both work under the direct supervision of the teacher.

Classroom Teacher Aide:

The duties of a classroom teacher aide are to assist teachers in non-teaching duties.

Some examples of typical duties for teacher aides are:

1. Management of records, materials and equipment
2. Management of the physical and behavioral needs of children.
3. Supervising students in areas such as cafeterias, playgrounds, and at dismissal.
4. Assisting with scoring and duplication of tests and quizzes
5. Monitoring students while performing tasks assigned by the teacher
6. Other related tasks as may be assigned by an immediate supervisor.
7. Tending to the physical needs of children, especially multiply handicapped special education students.

Classroom teacher aides are responsible for the entire class as well as bus duty, lunch duty

Individual Teacher Aide:

1. Individual teacher aides are responsible for one assigned student, supervising their student during all activities.
2. Individual teacher aides must escort their student to specials and all related services. The individual aide must remain with the student to whom they are assigned during all related service sessions. An Individual Aide may be excused from remaining with their student during individual counseling sessions to maintain confidentiality.
3. They are responsible for bus, lunch, specials, physical and educational needs as determined by the teacher. They are to remain with their student during these times.

Teaching Assistant:

The teaching assistant may, under the general supervision of a licensed or certified teacher, be involved with the direct instruction of students. Their duties are to assist teachers by performing functions such as:

1. Working with individual or small groups of children on special instructional projects.
2. Providing the teacher with input about pupils to assist the teacher in developing appropriate learning experiences.
3. Assisting students by using available instructional resources and assisting the teacher by aiding in the development of instructional materials
4. Utilizing their own special skills and abilities by assisting in a variety of programs, such as foreign language, arts, crafts, etc.
5. Assisting in other related instructional work as may be required, and in performing any or all of the duties assigned to the teacher aide.
6. Other related tasks as may be assigned by the immediate supervisor.

I hope this helps with any confusion that may exist.

Some dates to remember:

October 30th -Para Rep. Meeting - Please provide any questions or concerns to your Building Rep
November 20th –SRP (School Related Professional) Recognition Day

Again I would like to thank all of you for your support and patience during our contract negotiations. Without you we could not have done it.

MEMBERSHIP**Marje Strawbridge**

Hope everyone had a great summer. I can be reached at WHB@Aquebogue.
The school phone number is **727-7176**, my email is **straw74berry@yahoo.com**.

New members will receive a packet from the union once they have been approved by the ESBOCES board. This packet will be sent to your building representative. Inside there is a NYSUT application, a payroll deduction card about dues, a Vote-Cope contribution card, and an employee reference card for the union's records. Remember to list what building (s) you are in and your current position.

If you are already an employee and have not filled out all of these forms, please contact your building rep or me for a blank form. **If you make any changes during your employment you need to update your information with Human Resources and me.**

I'm looking forward to working with you, and stress the importance of joining.

Good things can happen when we work together.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Shelly Bernstein



A big welcome back to the 2007 - 2008 school year. As always, I'm sure it will present a year of changes, challenges and opportunities. Change comes in many forms - from different students, administrators and locations to changes in state testing, requirements and regulations. My best advice is to go with the flow. We must meet state and federal mandates and the needs of our component school districts. This subjects us to many outside influences, many of which we have no control of, but we can manage them.

Our union, in cooperation with our administration and the agency, has made every effort to retain staff and provide quality educational programs for our students. With a pattern of declining enrollment over the past few years, we must remain vigilant in assessing the viability of offering new programs and maintaining the quality of our current programs. The bottom line is always the child and that should be in the front of everyone's mind every day. All the other stuff does present numerous challenges to our daily teaching, but it is just stuff.

The real important thing that we do every day is teach the children. Each and everyone of us has the power to forever change a child's life. That is an awesome responsibility, as well as an awesome gift. When I walk into my classroom I leave all the "stuff" outside. The children should not be subjected to it and I shouldn't let it distract me from the children. It also lets me be a happy camper in my classroom.

Next school year there will be some major changes for some of our programs. North Country Learning Center will be moving to the Brookhaven Academic Center location. Brookhaven Academic Center will be merging with the Jefferson Academic Center and moving to their location in Port Jefferson. These changes obviously require a tremendous amount of planning, as well as working out the logistics of actually moving the two sites. To assist in this endeavor, a committee has been formed at each of the sites to assess the needs of each program. Later in the year there will be a joint committee from BRAC and JAC to consolidate the plans. No one expects these moves to go off without a hitch, but with early planning it is hoped that they will be as painless as possible. Patience will be required of everyone.

After over a quarter of a century at included sites, I am now located at BRAC. Enrollment was insufficient to open my class. This is my ninth move since being in BOCES employ and I even own my own hand truck and packing tape dispenser. I've learned to roll with the punches. I mention this because when I address issues of change, I speak from experience. When you get that feeling of "nobody knows what I'm going through," bear in mind that there are many of us who know exactly what you are going through.

My final comment relates to commitment. Commit yourself to do the very best job you can each and every day. If today was less than spectacular, walk into the classroom tomorrow expecting it to be a better day. Each day is an opportunity for achievement. Speaking of commitment, your building reps are there to help you. If you have any concerns, talk to your rep. If he/she cannot address your concerns or answer your questions, I will be contacted. I too am committed to serving our members. Have a fabulous year. Until next time...

C.T.E. REPORT**Francis Nilsen**

Welcome back, after a difficult summer most of us are back in our same classes. Between SCE and CTE we have been affected. The question is what are we going to do about it? Do we just sit back and say it's all over? Or are we going to be proactive in finding what will solve this problem? If we sit back, June is a short way from now. We need to be proactive. Not by complaining, but coming up with ideas and solutions.

The agency has initiative committees that we need to be part of. The list came out the first week of September with a deadline to join a committee of Sept. 12th. Yes we are past that deadline! But if you really want to see our agency grow or at least stay the same size please get involved. Contact the chair for the committee and see if you can help. Since as of today (9/27) no committees have met, there might be room.

The other option you have is to funnel questions through your building SDMs. This will get the topic in the minutes. All the minutes go up the ladder. Complaining is not the answer! What solutions or ideas do you have? All of us have stakeholder involvement. Use this summer's experience as a wake up call. No one, including your area V.P. is protected.

This is also the year for you to complete your lesson plans on the web. The web format is user friendly. You can also get agency hours by taking the workshops. The list for agency hours came out yesterday, I counted all the ones that apply to us. There are plenty, get a jump start and get some of your hours out of the way. You should keep track as you are doing them. The form is called Article 7 staff development. I find it is easy to do. Our contract says we are to do 15 hours. Being a contractor as well, abide by your contract.

Enrollment numbers are looking good in the tech centers. It is still important to follow up on all students. It's better to have them go to another class than to lose the students. Now is the time to start looking at promoting your programs. Let us all be more proactive for our students and programs. Have a great year.

SCTE REPORT**Rich De Betta**

Would someone like to tell me where the summer of '07 went? It came upon us all of a sudden and it was over. A plethora of changes have occurred in the Agency and Division this past summer affecting many of our staff members. Issues that were addressed included program enrollment, program needs and areas of certification. This may have impacted some staff, but it had to be done to streamline the process in the future. The good news is that no one lost his or her job and health benefits remained intact.

Another caveat of this action would be a "wake-up call" for all staff in the CTE division. There has to exist a unison amongst the divisions and hopefully future committee meetings will address and convey the message. A new Special Career and Technical Education Committee has been formed and is scheduled to meet on October 23rd. I am hopeful that positive outcomes will develop from this collaboration of Special Career and Tech Education. I will keep you posted. Until then, I hope everyone has a great year!



First, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back all of our returning members, and to welcome for the first time all of our new members. I hope that everyone had a restful and relaxing summer and that you are re-energized and ready to meet the challenges of another school year.

As the grievance officer I am charged with the responsibility of enforcing the terms and conditions of both the teacher's contract (BLUE), and the para-educator's contract (YELLOW). In so doing it is also my responsibility to research, prepare, and file all grievances on behalf of the BEES and its members. In order for the grievance process to be successful it is of the utmost importance that the association be notified of possible contract violations as soon as they occur.

The chain of command for the grievance process is as follows:

1. The member should contact his or her building representative as soon as possible. They are your first line of defense. The building rep will schedule a meeting with the supervisor and all parties will attempt to come to a resolution of the issue.
2. If the building rep is unsuccessful, he or she will then contact the area vice president who will attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If the area vice president is unable to reach an agreement then it will be referred to the grievance officer who will then reduce the grievance to writing and present it formally to the supervisor.

This all must take place within 30 school days from when the member knew or should have known of the act or condition on which the grievance is based. Timeliness in filing grievances is critical. If a grievance is not filed in a timely manner the administration can refuse to entertain the grievance and the association has no further recourse.

The executive officers of our association have worked tirelessly on your behalf during the last school year, and have continued to do the same over the summer, in order to resolve more problems than I could possibly list here. As a result of their exceptional dedication and hard work, the BEES did not have to file a single grievance during the 2006-07 school year. This promises to be another busy year with the teacher's contract going into negotiations and all of the other issues that must be dealt with.

Congratulations to the para-educators on the ratification of their new contract. Please take the time to read your contract. **The grievance articles are in Article 3 of the para-educator's contract, and Article 13 of the teacher's contract.**

For more information go to our website

www.BEESBEACON.org



Welcome back. I hope everyone had a relaxing summer. I sure you all took my advice last year and read your Collective Bargaining Agreement. If you did then you probably came across a few things you did not know or remember. Well then, if you found reading the contract informative then I'm sure you can't wait to crack open the 2007 Staff Manual and the Employee Handbook 2007-2008. Both are chock full of information you should be aware of.

United Resource Networks

This is a company that provides products and services that support safe, successful and cost-effective management of patients with complex health conditions. It is not a health insurance provider. They provide information on choosing the right health care provider, clinic, or medical center. They also provide information on transplantations, cancer, chronic kidney disease, congenital heart disease, infertility, neonatology, obesity, pregnancy, and women's health services. You can contact the United Resource Network at 1-800-847-2050 or through their website, www.urnweb.com.

I have heard very good things about their **Cancer Resource Services**. The number for the Cancer Resource Services is 1-866-936-6002.

Welcome

I would like to welcome Marysue Dileva to BOCES. Marysue Dileva is the new benefits person in human resources. She has taken the position held by Susan Ray. Susan retired this September and I will miss having her as a resource. She was always friendly and extraordinarily helpful. I am looking forward to a pleasant working relationship with Marysue. You can reach her at human resources, 289-2200.

Once again there are a few things you need to attend to.

Updating Your Coverage

Ask yourself, "Have any changes happened in my life that I should have let Human Resources know about?" They're good over there, but they're not psychic. So, if you think a change has occurred that might affect your benefits, let Human Resources and the Union know in writing.

A few examples are:

- your marital status – married, divorced, widowed
- your dependents – new eligible, no longer eligible
- you or your dependent(s) become eligible for Medicare benefits, whether you turn 65 or are under age 65 with a disability. You must register for Part B of Medicare through Social Security three months before age 65. Failure to do so will impact your health coverage.
- If your address changed

Any changes you have should be hand delivered to Human Resources at the Hines Building. If you can not deliver it yourself the mailing address is Eastern Suffolk BOCES, 201 Sunrise Highway, Patchogue, NY 11772 attn: Human Resources. The address for the Union is BOCES Educator's of Eastern Suffolk, 440 Waverly Ave, Building 4, Suite 12, Patchogue, NY 11772. Attn: Marge Strawbridge.

Dependent College Student

At midnight on the 19th birthday of your dependent, his or her Health insurance and Dental insurance will be terminated. If your dependent is attending college or an accredited institution of higher learning, taking at least 12 credits, you can continue their coverage by submitting the appropriate affidavit to BOTH your health insurance and dental insurance carriers. You must submit this form each school semester, so make several copies once you obtain the form. The forms are available through your health insurance or dental insurance or your building rep. If your dependent is not attending college or an accredited institution of higher learning you might be eligible to purchase COBRA. Contact Human Resources to find out more about your eligibility.

FSA Enrollment

Here's that November deadline again. But this time you can save some money. FSA, Flexible Spending Account, allows you to use pre-tax dollars to pay for certain health care and dependent care expenses. BUT, you need to know your expenses. If your expenses don't equal up to the amount you contribute you will lose your unspent contributions. The money you can save from the tax advantage can be well worth the effort of researching your expenses in calculating how much you should contribute. My suggestion would be to start out small and increase your contribution each year as you learn how the FSA plan works. Your building should be receiving information sheets and enrollment forms about the beginning of November. Some OTC medical purchases are now eligible expenses. Check with the plan advisor for specifics. Remember you will need an original receipt when submitting for reimbursement.

Pre-retirement seminars

I know I've said it before, but I'm going to say it again...

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START PLANNING FOR YOUR RETIREMENT!

Future Retirees Seminar

I will be conducting the Future Retirees seminar again this year. If you are within five years of retiring you should plan to attend this seminar. I will be discussing the contractual provisions related to retirement and terminal leave.

Members covered by the Para Educator's contract should attend the November 14th seminar at 3:30. Members covered by the Teacher's contract should attend the November 15th seminar at 3:30. Both seminars will be held at the Union office (440 Waverly Ave, Building 4, Suite 12, Patchogue). Seating is limited so please register via e-mail – beesvpcb@optonline.net.

NYS Teacher's Retirement System Planning Resources

<http://www.nystrs.org/main/retirementplanning.html>

Visit the Retirement Planning site for a host of tools to help you understand your Retirement System benefits, including a **free** day-long pre-retirement planning seminar.

Hauppauge – November 9

Melville – December 14

Ronkonkoma – November 16

Uniondale – October 26 or November 10

You can also call 1-800-356-3128 ext 6180 to register.

The publication *Countdown to Retirement* outlines the steps to take in the year leading to your retirement. Get your copy by calling (800) 782-0289 or go to the website.

NYSTRS' *Retirement Countdown* video walks members through the steps they should take during

their last year of work to prepare for retirement.

NYS Employee's Retirement System Planning Resources

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/>

Preparing for Retirement – a new seven part series is now available on the website in video, slide show or text versions

Members of the NYSERS can visit the website to explore their retirement options.

Contact the Consultation Site Office toll-free at 1-866-805-0990 to schedule an appointment at the Hauppauge office.

From The New York Teacher

"If you have recently completed 10 years of membership in the retirement system, don't forget to check your first paycheck this fall.

Thanks to VOTE-COPE, union backed legislation in 2000, employers must stop deducting the 3 percent contribution for Tier 3 and 4 members when you've been a retirement system member for 10 years. Remember, this means membership in TRS, not just years of service, so it doesn't matter if some of your service is part time or if you've switched school districts." (*New York Teacher*, New York State United Teachers, September 7, 2006, p. 17)

Remember, as in everything that is important – ***KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING***

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for future issues you can contact me at beesvpcb@optonline.net. If you need to reach me concerning any personal benefits issues, you can reach me at Milliken Technical Center 244-5800 or at beesvpcb@optonline.net

ITINERANT NEWS Rachele Alwais



We are saddened that the Speech Department has had a reduction in staff. The teachers involved have been notified and we are offering our support. As a result of these cut backs many Teachers of the Speech and Hearing Handicapped have had their case loads consolidated, let's be understanding. We hired a Teacher of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired this past summer. Other itinerant areas are experiencing a small increase in numbers since the beginning of school. As usual, the positions are posted in all the buildings, mailed to those not in BO-CES facilities and interviews are conducted with representation from the respective departments.

Please welcome the **lead teachers for the Speech (Denise D'Onofrio-Zizzo), Hearing (Mary Alibrandi) and Vision (Debra Berenz) Departments.** The lead teacher position is not supervisory in nature.

I can be reached at NCLC in the afternoons at 689-9600. If am not available please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Please leave a phone number and a good time(s) to return your call. If your questions do not need an immediate response please send your concerns to me at NCLC.



Welcome back to the 2007-2008 school year. This is the first year that I can remember starting off hiring two probationary social workers (1 – Special Ed & 1 – Student Assistance). I hope that means that things are looking good for all the special education and Student Assistance social workers. We are also lucky to finally have a lead teacher in our area and that is Jennifer Farnum.

There seems to be no change in the Medicaid position in the state. As soon as I find the information I will post it on the BEES website or the next newsletter. The following information is the most up to date that I have received. Please keep in mind that the New York State Education Department (SED) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) have recently changed the guidelines for Medicaid billing for services provided under the School Supportive Health Service Program (SSHSP). School Districts must bill the Medicaid program only for those types of services that are Medicaid reimbursable as follows:

"Counseling services may not be billed unless provided by a professional whose credentials allow that same service outside of the school."

Counseling Services - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that counseling services provided to a Medicaid-eligible student must be provided by a professional whose credentials allow them to provide that same service outside of the school; providers in the schools must hold the same qualifications as the providers in the community. Unless the provider is dually licensed, this would preclude Medicaid claims and reimbursement for counseling services provided by Certified School Counselors, Certified School Social Workers, and Certified School Psychologists. For example, school psychologists are restricted to providing services within the school and are therefore not equivalent to professionals in the community unless they are also licensed under Title 8 of the New York State Education Law to provide counseling services. In addition to maintaining documentation for billed services, please also maintain documentation of those services not being billed. If the guidelines change in the future, those records may be useful.

CMS determined that Medical services may not be billed to Medicaid unless provided by a professional whose credentials allow that same service outside the school. Services must be provided by professionals who are NYS licensed and registered. Due to the different licenses that social workers hold; upon receipt of clarification from SED's Office of the Professions and DOH legal division, additional information will be provided to clarify which counseling titles meet CMS credentialing requirements.

For more information check this site: www.oms.nysed.gov/medicaid. To find out which credentials that you have please visit the site: www.op.nysed.gov/opsearches.htm

We are working with the BOCES administration so this does not become a problem for all of us. As soon as we get more clarification from the state we will hold a meeting to discuss the issue. Please just clarify your license and make any revisions that are necessary.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Lisa Reilly at JAC 476-0564.

Retirees are encouraged to join the Union Retiree chapter, and to also become active members in the Long Island Alliance for Retired Americans. A letter from Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant. **Why BOCES retirees should become members?** is available on the union website www.BEESBEACON.org.

A new option for retirees is to use our website to keep in contact with their fellow retirees and a link to our current membership. The Alumni Page will be a place where you can list your e-mail address and mailing address so you can stay in contact with others. If you would like to be included in this section when it is added to the site, please send your contact information to MaryLI120@aol.com.

Retiree dates to remember:

Oct 15th 2007 CORTLI luncheon at noon. In the cottage at the Milleridge Inn.

Oct 16th 2007 BEES Fall Meeting at 10AM at 440 Waverly Av, Patchogue.

Nov 8th Eastern Suffolk Fall Luncheon at the Milliken Center

BOCES Leadership Conference

By Shelly Bernstein and Lisa Reilly

On September 28 and 29 we attended the annual NYSUT Conference for BOCES Leadership in Albany. Since this was the first time that either of us attended this conference, we were requested to write an article on our experiences. This was the 35th annual conference and attendees were from BOCES from all parts of the state. Workshops were held on a variety of topics from Professional Development requirements for teachers/teacher assistants to Transition Services and Legal Updates. Department meetings were held in the areas of Special Education, Career and Technical Education, Related Services and Alternative Education.

It was interesting to note that the same concerns that we have at Eastern Suffolk BOCES are shared by BOCES throughout the state. It didn't matter if you were from a rural, suburban or urban BOCES. Everyone is feeling the pressure of federal and state mandates and the negative impact they can have on our students.

At the Special Education Department meeting that Shelly attended, a representative from State Ed was the presenter. He provided background on federal legislation and how that has impacted state legislation. This impacts what we do on the local level. He spoke of what the state refers to as the **"two percenters"** - those students who are functioning too high to qualify for alternate assessments and performing too low to successfully pass regents exams. Personally, we think they ought to be referred to as the **"sixty or seventy percenters"** for the students we serve. Although the state seems to be aware of the fact that an assessment needs to be developed for these students, it doesn't appear as though one will be forthcoming anytime soon. The issue of using extremely labor intensive alternate assessments for the profoundly handicapped was also a hot topic.

We received a great deal of information and are currently reviewing it. We will try and share the information through Rep Council and Area meetings so that you may all benefit from our attendance at the conference. It was an excellent conference and NYSUT did a great job of offering topics to broaden our knowledge base.

B E E S

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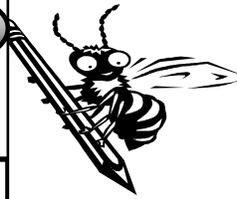
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THE BEACON

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Journalism Competition
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The BEACON is an award winning publication of
the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk,
First Supervisory District.

Union Local 3037

is a member of NYSUT, AFT and the AFL-CIO.

The BEACON is published 5 times a year .
The local is responsible for all its contents and articles.

**The dead line for articles to be published in the
December issue is November 15, 2007**

Articles and ads must be submitted electronically and-
have your name and BOCES site .

BEACON e-mail BeesBeacon@aol.com

Notes, comments and suggestions can be sent
by email or interoffice to
Tom Rosati @ Premm Learning Center

