

*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 25 Issue 1**

**September 2011**

***Starting and Ending***

**Inside this issue:**

***Editor's note— Because of the sudden closure of the Patchogue Manor, an abbreviated general meeting was held at the BEES Waverly Avenue union office. The following is what Thelma shared with members who reassembled at the union office.***

Welcome to the BOCES Educators General Membership Meeting. It is the hope of your Executive Board that everyone had a healthy and great summer vacation, whether it was for the entire summer of just these past 3 weeks.

This is the last time that I will be standing in front of the membership as your President. I will be retiring in June. The membership will be electing a new president in March to take office July 1, 2012. I hope that you will keep in mind one very important fact. It is not about the job title a person who runs for this office holds, it is about their expertise, knowledge and most important their passion for the job they are being elected to do.

We are one united union, a body of almost 1400 members who consist of para-educators and certificated staff. Anyone of those members, as long as they fit the guidelines in our constitution can run for the office of President. If I have succeeded in one thing these past 6 years that I have been President, I hope it is that I have laid to rest the misconception that only a teacher could be the President of this union. Anyone who has the drive, passion, knowledge and most important of all, commitment, is the person that you should be electing, regardless of their title.

We have accomplished numerous incredible agreements that have benefited our membership under this current Executive Board. I am proud to have worked alongside all of them for the past 6 years.

During the times that we are all experiencing, school budgets that are being slashed, school staff under attack, pension systems under attack, loss of jobs and a general feeling from the public that "teachers" and their pensions are the root of problems facing their school districts. We are fortunate that our working relationships with the current administration allow us to represent our membership and work things out in their best interest collaboratively and fairly.

I wish I could tell you that we did not have to excess any staff, but we did and we continue to keep an eye on our enrollment and watch incoming applications and the numbers carefully. Shifting of staff between programs was done in an effort to keep to a minimum staff being reduced or exceeded.

The blue contract members voted on and agreed to a hard freeze for this school year. Once again, thank you. With all of our component districts doing similar concessions, we would have only seen a 1.5% increase on our base if we had not done the freeze. Because of this concession, our blue contract now runs till June 2014.

The yellow contract members agreed to extend their contract till June 2013 for minimal raises and increases to their health insurance. Again, thank you.

Because all of you agreed to do what we did as a union, this agency was able to keep tuition increases under 2%, Without these concessions, the tuition rate would have been between 7 and 9% for this year.

**I can tell you for a fact, that would have resulted in triple digit staff being exceeded.**

As those of you who work summer school know, the agency has been using attendance as one criteria for summer school hiring for the past 2 summers. . For over 30 years, I have been in attendance at opening day meetings and heard each and every union president from Larry Blank and Bill Patrissi, to Jim Arden caution you about Attendance. I have done so for the past 6 years. Many of our members who were denied summer school came to the union this past May.

We asked NYSUT to look into the matter. This is the decision we received. I quote, Eastern Suffolk BOCES summer school policy restricts hiring applicants based on an attendance policy of 7 days or more for the past 3 consecutive years. A court would find that BOCES is justified in implementing this requirement under a business necessity theory as BOCES can assert the need to assure attendance and curb sick leave abuse.

**This policy does not run afoul of the law or ADA.**

Summer school is not a given. Your attendance will be taken into account. Attendance can also be used to deny tenure to certified staff and permanent status to teacher aides. If you are sick, obviously stay home, but use good judgment.

You are required to sign for Staff Handbooks. By signing for them you have read them and acknowledges that you are aware of the policies and regulations inside. You are responsible for what is in them. Be aware of what is required of you as a staff member and an employee.

### **Union Budget**

For the 8<sup>th</sup> year in a row, this board has managed to put together a budget and NOT increase your local dues. We have no control over how much the NYSUT or AFT dues go up each year. As a unit governed by NYSUT we must pay those dues.

What we have is control over our local dues. These are the monies that we use to run our local. As an Executive Board we have decided to make modifications to our budget and tighten our belts just like everyone else. We respect the fact that this membership either voted for a freeze or made concessions for this year contractually.

As an Executive Board, we felt the need to keep local dues frozen and made some changes in the way we will be doing business this year. We have:

- 1) Cut the numbers of members that we will be sending to conventions for this year
- 2) We as a board for this year have agreed to reduce our stipends
- 3) We will not send out flowers to our membership according to our welfare policy
- 4) We will have the retirement honorarium, but will not be giving out gifts
- 5) Our BEACON will only be available on line at our website.

I would like to thank John Olsen for presenting the budget for the 2011 – 2012 school year for approval by the membership. In addition, thank you to the budget committee members, Carol Esposito, Angela Ritchie, Michelle Tinter and the Executive Board for making some tough decisions.

### **Student Numbers**

For each area of our program, budgets are proposed based on the number of students that are anticipated. These are reviewed and adjustments for staffing are made at various points in the year. Here are the numbers and how they have affected staffing just prior to school starting this year. Previous yearly totals are included for comparison.

### **Special Ed. Report**

Sept. 2009	1513 students
September 2010	1429 students
Opening day Sept. 2011	1344 Full Time student Equivalent (FTE's).
The budget was built on	1359 FTEs.

Currently we have over 100 open classroom slots throughout the special ed. dept.

In special education, 12 teachers, 4 teaching assistants and 10 aides were recalled back from the PEL list into substitute appointments. Currently we have sufficient numbers of teachers, assistants and aides to meet the needs of all programs. If the need arises after identifying the no shows that we need more staff or reassignment of staff in buildings that have to many, adjustments will be made toward the end of October. The standard process of identifying no shows and excepting new students will be followed.

As per yellow contract language, any para-professional that was involuntarily transferred from their program will be recalled back to their original program if a position opens up. This happens in seniority order and before any new staff is hired in those buildings.

### **Career and Tech Report**

Sept. 2009	2239 students
September 2010	2007 students
September 2011	1856 students enrolled.
The budget was built on	1763 students.

Historically we lose about 10% of our students before lock in. The current enrollment puts CTE in good shape as long as they don't lose that 10%. The agency's intent is not to cut more staff unless they have no choice after lock in.

In an effort to have as many teachers employed full time as possible, 3 CTE Teachers are now split between campuses. 7 CTE teachers were reduced to part time and 3 teachers were excessed from the agency. CTE has added a new section of Animal Science at Ward Tech in hopes to entice new students to that campus. In addition, due to low enrollment and a retirement, two classes were combined and a new course was created called computer technology and repair.

The recertification of 8 courses for the 2011 -2012 school year was successful and this year 7 more classes are up for re certification and all 7 have embedded ELA credits. The agency is looking to created a Senior School model program and is awaiting commitments from several school districts.

The hope is that this model will increase enrollments for the 2012 – 2013 school year in CTE. This model will be highlighted as Curriculum Council meetings and all district meetings with Principals. The agency is moving ahead with assisting Wm. Floyd with their CTE model and many of our CTE teachers have helped with this endeavor. The agency is putting a huge effort into public relations campaigns to support CTE in our regions.

### **Special Career Education**

September 2009	515 students
September 2010	470 students
September 2011	454 students.

Enrollment is of serious concern in the AM classes at Islip and in the PM classes at Ward Tech. Summer camp was again successful and hopefully will continue to build a student base.

### **Building Upgrades**

IAC has a new heating system and central air. BLC has new air conditioning and various facilities had their doors replaced to improve safety. Renovations were done at ICC with new air conditioning systems, Supported employment was moved to MTC, several new hand washing sinks were installed and air blowers were installed in the spray booths at ICC, MTC and Ward Tech to comply with new paint standards.

### **BEACON and Our Website BEESBEACON.org**

The BEACON will now only be available on line. We are going totally GREEN. This will be a tremendous cost saving for our local. Please sign up for the listserv on the website, and you will have an e-mail sent directly to your home address, when the BEACON is published, or if important information needs to get to you quickly and directly.

I'd like to thank Thom Rosati our BEACON editor for his work on our newsletter which has earned a multitude of awards, along with his wife Nancy, who maintains our website. For the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row the website won 1<sup>st</sup> place as the best union website in New York State, and our site has been nationally recognized as the best union website by the American Federation of Teachers.

### **Elections**

It is not an election year for our reps, but due to retirements and changes in building staff, we have some vacancies. Please work with your executive board to hold Rep elections as soon as possible. Please submit election results to our Executive Vice President Pat Copertino.

This is an election year for your officers. This is the opportunity you have as members to elect the people you want representing you for the next two years. Stay involved, read the biographies when they are published in January and VOTE when you receive your ballots.

Have a great school year.

*Thelma*

On Monday, September 12 from 3:30 till 4:30 there is a special program featuring "Our stories". The video was prepared by Adam Berch, who is our TV production teacher at BTC.

This is a program that you really should try to go see. It is a documentary of what some of our membership recalls about 9/11. Kudos to Adam, he did a phenomenal job.

A day that changed the world...

September 11, 2001

Come see

a moving tribute to that day

**ESBOCES Recalls 9/11**

**Our Stories**

Sherwood Instructional Support Center

15 Andrea Road, Holbrook, NY

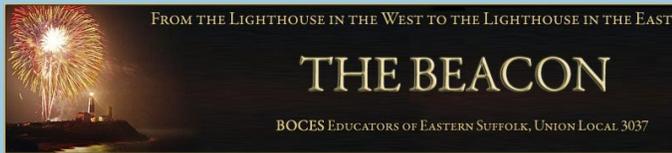
Monday, September 12, 2011

3:30 PM



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and the

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**[www.BEESBEACON.org](http://www.BEESBEACON.org)**

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**Proud members  
of  
NYSUT, AFT and AFL-CIO**

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