

BEDFORD TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
POLITICAL ACTION REPORT – 4/18/13
Submitted by: Mimi Warren

For the past two years, spring has been a time of pivotal battles. In April of 2011, we were fighting to uphold collective bargaining rights. Last year, we were in a heated battle to maintain our privacy rights when it came to APPR. Well, this year we are facing yet another battle, the battle to preserve public education.

On **Saturday, June 8th**, members of NYSUT, along with stakeholders, including parents, administrators and board of education members will travel to Albany to rally for the Future of Public Education. NYSUT is actively working with these stakeholders to build coalitions and return the “public” to public education. Topics will include high stakes testing, funding (tax cap, underfunding of higher education), and access (Dream Act) to name a few.

Additional details will be available soon. Please consider joining your colleagues around the state to raise your voice for public education. SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT!

In District Lobbying: Over the next two weeks, members of locals from Westchester and around the state will be meeting with Legislators in their district offices. We will discuss high stakes testing and ask our legislators to support the Truth-About-Testing Act of 2013 (Assembly Bill: A-6594 Nolan). This legislation pushes for a thorough review of all costs incurred in the development and administration of assessments given in New York State. In addition, we will encourage our legislators to enact A-6593 Nolan – which is legislation prohibiting the administration of assessments to students in kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 for anything other than diagnostic purposes. Imagine giving a version of the ELA and Math tests to students in kindergarten...

We will also be focusing on Tax Cap reform. Maintaining the current Tax Cap will continue to force districts to eliminate programs and cut teaching positions. Without significant additional aid, many school districts lack sufficient resources to fund current programs. In addition, we will speak to replacing the 60% supermajority requirement needed to override the Tax Cap with a simple majority vote.

We will also be asking legislators to pass The Dream Act and The Farm Workers Fair Labor Practices Act.

NYSUT Race for Solidarity: NYSUT members will be gathering on May 18th at FDR Park in Yorktown for the first 5K Race for Solidarity. All proceeds will go to the NYSUT Disaster Relief fund for Hurricane Sandy. Come and run and stick around for a bar-b-que following the race. It’s guaranteed to be a fun event. Walkers welcome!

Remember to visit NYSUT’s Member Action Center and keep sending those Faxes
<https://mac.nysut.org/issues>

VOTE/COPE dollars at work: as I reported last month, NYSUT members from around the state attended Committee of 100 just prior to the final version of the state budget. After that lobbying event, the state budget was passed with some adjustments in funding for education. For the first time since 2008, funding for higher education remained constant with some modest increases in a few areas. \$200,000,000 in operating aid for Kindergarten through 12th grade was restored. \$3,195,000 was also restored to public libraries.

NYSUT members sent 86,000 faxes and web letters. You can and do make a difference.

** Remember to visit NYSUT on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NYSUTUnited>
Of 600,000 NYSUT members, only 4,000 have joined NYSUT's Facebook page. Find out what your colleagues across the state are thinking.

Westchester Putnam Central Labor Council: Each year on **April 28, Workers Memorial Day**, working people throughout the world remember those who were hurt or killed on the job and renew our struggle for safe workplaces. In town squares and union halls, at worksites and memorials, in community after community—we are gathering to remember our brothers and sisters who have lost their lives and to fight for safe workplaces and for good jobs for all workers. Workplace fatalities and injuries have significantly decline. Workplace safety happened because workers and their unions organized, fought and demanded action from employers and their government.

In honor of Workers Memorial Day, members of the Westchester-Putnam Central Labor Council will hold a vigil at the Kensico Dam in Valhalla. The ceremony will be followed by a reception honoring a public official and a local union leader. Pete Harckham, County Legislator and Lou Bousche, President of IAFF 628 (Yonkers Fire Fighters) will be honored for their ongoing work and support of labor.

The slogan for Workers Memorial Day is: **Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living.** Workers Memorial Day reminds us that job safety for everyone is a priority.

Did you know... Every year, more people are killed at work than in wars...