

GTA TODAY

By Don Pallozzi
November 2007

Thanksgiving Wishes: Have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving; post report cards and pre-conferences, you certainly have earned it.

Parent Teacher Conferences: Unfortunately the District and Association can not agree on what business as usual means. I met with the Superintendent on September 24 to discuss our conference time, which is when he said it would be business as usual. It has since become an issue of significant debate and no resolution. As usual we are advising that everyone comply with the 6 hours while we grieve this. We will need to confirm what the past agreement was in each building and have confirmation of what occurs this year.

Retirement News: December 1 is the deadline for notifying the District of your intent to retire in order to receive the \$18,000 retirement incentive. Video and in person conferencing schedules are available on line at www.nystrs.org. If you have questions regarding eligibility please call the office at 621-7970.

The District seminars mentioned an application for the \$18,000 which is taken care of in the spring. The District will send us a list of eligible retirees and we will invite you to a session with 2 ING reps to take care of the paper work involved in establishing the account.

This account exists due to a grievance settlement which provides for the money to be deposited in this account. It is exempt from FICA which means saving the 7.65% deduction on the \$18,000.

New York State Teacher's Retirement: Sean Esposito and I attended the Retirement System convention in Saratoga November 5 and 6. There is a great deal of discussion about retirement incentives, 55/25 and service credit for Tier III and IV members who contributed 3% beyond 10 years. Reading between the lines it looks like the issue with the most momentum is the service credit. The TRS website www.nystrs.org has a legislative link to keep you informed about all potential legislation and its status.

Maggie Brooks' FAIR plan: NYSUT's lawsuit against the FAIR plan will be heard December 7, 2007 and the judge has promised to rule by December 14, 2007. The implications are significant for us with the potential loss of \$2.27 million this year and \$4.6 million next year. I received a call from Senator Joe Robach who is trying to mediate between the Republicans and Democrats. He sees a ¼ of a cent sales tax increase as a compromise. Politics aside we can not afford to lose this money.

Contract for Excellence: On Wednesday November 7 Steve Monks and I were at NYSUT in Albany along with 55 other qualifying Districts to hear the latest from SED on the Contracts for Excellence. As a District receiving an increase in foundation aid greater than 10% and having schools on the need to improve list we are obligated to provide the State with a plan outlining how those funds will be used within State defined categories. Our plan has been approved by the State and I will be meeting with the Superintendent to discuss the Association's involvement next year. Stay tuned...

Mentoring: The District has received approval for an additional 1.4 mentors through the MTIP grant. To date we have two applicants. With over 130 new hires our need far exceeds the number of mentors we have currently, please consider applying for the position.

Food Drive: Our annual food drive is scheduled for February. If you are planning a food drive at your building or through a club and would like to hold it in conjunction with ours please contact Katie Park. It is certainly a worthy cause and would be a great opportunity to work together.

Sam's Club Membership: The Association is eligible for a group discount since we have a business membership. The rate is \$30.00 for groups of 50 or more or \$25.00 for each member in a group exceeding 1000 members. This will apply to renewals as well as new memberships. To date we have 20 members interested which won't qualify us for the reduced rate. If you are interested in this please contact the office at 621-7970. We will need to notify Sam's one way or the other by December 14.

Health Insurance Open Enrollment: The open enrollment period is upon us. Rates increased between 8% and 9%, on average, between the Extended and Select plans. Blue Million rates have not been announced. If you are currently on Extended it may be wise to consider the savings by moving to Select. The difference in a single premium between Select and Extended is over \$300.00 yearly while between the Family plan it is over \$900.00 annually. It varies depending on your hire date but can result in substantial savings. If you would like to discuss the numbers please call.

Golden Apple Award: The purpose of our Golden Apple Award is to promote Greece teachers within our community and to recognize the profound impact we have on the lives of our students. See the attachment for further information. (see below)

**ANNUAL
GREECE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
"GOLDEN APPLE"
TEACHER RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

Teachers are the heart of our school system. They nurture our children's inquisitive minds and prepare them for the challenges of the future. They need and deserve our support.

The Greece Teachers Association is sponsoring a program that will honor one outstanding representative of the teaching profession from the Greece Central School District. Please take part in this exciting and worthwhile program by nominating a teacher who exemplifies "excellence in teaching." For more information, call the offices of the Greece Teachers Association at 621-7970.

Who is eligible? All teachers (K - 12, Special Education, Library/Media Specialists, School Counselors, ESL, Psychologists, Speech Pathologists and Adult Literacy) currently teaching in the Greece Central School District.

NOMINATION FORM

Teacher's Name (First and Last) _____

School _____ Grade Level/Subject Area _____

Nominator's Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Relationship of nominator to teacher:

Student	Former Student	Student's Parent
Teacher or Staff	Administrator	Other

Please attach an additional sheet describing why you think this teacher is one of Greece Central's most outstanding teachers.

Nominations must be postmarked on or before Dec. 1

**Mail to: Greece Teachers Association
3670 Mt. Read Blvd.
Rochester, New York 14616**