Sabbatical Leave Deadline Missed, Again

Rarely do Newburgh teachers take advantage of the Sabbatical Leave Provision of the contract. Once again, the February 1st deadline for sabbatical applications has past, and no NTA member applied.

The NTA encourages all qualified teachers to take interest in this opportunity to develop professional performance through independent research and achievement.

The following provisions apply in respect to sabbatical leave at three-quarters pay to teachers who have served for seven or more years in the district:

- No more than one percent of the staff will be granted sabbatical leave at any one time.
- Applications must be submitted to the Superintendent by February 1st for consideration of leave the following year.
- The application must state the purpose and the way in which it will benefit the district. The application will be submitted to a joint committee of three appointees of the superintendent and three nominees of the NTA, which will then make recommendations to the superintendent.
- The granting of sabbatical leave will be based on: years of service, type, nature, and urgency of the proposed research study, educational value, and other related activities such as but not limited travel.
- Teachers granted sabbatical leave must agree to return to the district for a period of two years immediately following the leave or be subject to a pro-rata refund of sabbatical pay at least 125 sick days, and no more than an average of eight sick days in the last two years of service. NTA members who exceed the average of eight sick days will not be penalized for utilizing FMLA.
- For any type of extended leave, all NTA members must complete the required forms located in the FMLA Guidance Document. Call the NTA for any questions you may have concerning FMLA.

Bond Vote Passes

The $50 million bond passed 1,370-780, including 200 NTA members. Included in this agreement is child care leave that covers much as twelve weeks of unpaid leave per twelve month period to care for a child, spouse, parent or loved one. NTA members who haven’t had to choose between their jobs and caring for a family member. NTA members need to be aware that the FMLA actually exists in two contractual clauses of Article XVL (Leave of Absence).

First, teachers with at least twelve months of service or 1,250 hours of employment may be granted as much as twelve weeks of unpaid leave per twelve month period to care for a child, spouse, parent or loved one. Included in this agreement is child care leave that covers prenatal care, adoption, and foster care.

Second, members in their last two years of service can invoke FMLA to avoid the penalty clause of the Payment for Unused Sick Days. Contractually, to qualify for the Sick Day Buy Back program, an NTA member must have 20 or more years of service, an accumulation of at least 125 sick days, and no more than an average of eight sick days in the last two years of service.

Family Medical Leave Act a Living Document

For the past twelve years, the FMLA has made an extraordinary difference in the lives of many NTA members who haven't had to choose between their jobs and caring for a family member. NTA members need to be aware that the FMLA actually exists in two contractual clauses of Article XVL (Leave of Absence).

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It is extremely rewarding to work collaboratively with all parties affected and begin to realize our very best hopes and dreams for our district,” commented NTA Phil Cordella.

Family Medical Leave Act

The good news for District taxpayers is that New York State will reimburse the district for roughly 80 percent of money spent on repair and new construction.

Walk, Workshops, and Social Events Kick-Off Teacher Appreciation Week

The Newburgh Teachers’ Association will host a series of activities the week of May 1st to celebrate National Teachers’ Appreciation Week. On Sunday, NTA members will participate in the Habitat for Humanity Walk-a-thon to raise funds for local housing projects. All members are urged to participate in the five mile walk. If you can not participate and would like to support Newburgh’s Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, please call the NTA office for assistance. Habitat for Humanity is one of Newburgh’s finest charities that affords many families with children in our schools ‘keys’ to a better lifestyle.

On Monday, building principals will hold the monthly faculty meeting. Please plan to take some time to recognize your fellow teachers.

As part of its ongoing series of joint NTA/NYS Teacher Retirement System in district collaborative workshops, the NTA will present an information workshop for members between the ages of 40 and 50 on Tuesday, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. in the lecture center at NFA. Last year, the NTA invited members 50 years old and older to the event. The retiree delegates hope to make this event a success in coming years and to create workshops that cover all target groups. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

The topic “District Health and Safety” is the focus Tuesday night at 7 p.m. in the Board of Education auditorium. Health and Safety teams comprised of parents, CSEA members, administrators, and NTA representatives will review and outline responsibilities for the future. NTA member Jeanne Daley and Newburgh Board of Education member, Tom Woodhull serve as co-chairs to the central District-wide Health and Safety Committee.

On Wednesday, May 4, NTA head delegates and teaching assistant representatives will meet with NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, Walter Fults, to discuss and define the best models of representation for the two membership groups.

The meeting is at 4 p.m. at the Union Hall. Guest speaker, Larry Waite, a NYSUT associate from Research and Educational Service, will conduct a district-wide workshop on the topic of Inclusion at Meadow Hill School from 4 to 6 p.m. The NTA sponsored workshop is the result of member concerns regarding Inclusion.

The Newburgh Teachers’ Association is proud to recognize all its teachers and encourages participation in all events. After Friday’s event, participants are cordially invited to an after workshop social where they can continue to discuss and address issues, but more importantly, be thanked for their years of dedication and hard work.

In conjunction with a number of these events, the NTA will have lawn signs outlining our position on the School District budget available for distribution. Since the signs are an important part of the school budget campaign, they should be displayed the weekend prior to the School Board Elections and Budget Vote on May 17th.
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Mentor Teacher Program Needed Now More Than Ever

Since its inception, the NTA Mentoring Program, under the auspices of the Newburgh Teacher Center, has proven to be a model of success. Initially established to assist and retain teachers new to a district, the results have exceeded all expectations. In fact, the invaluable benefits of a mentor program was the driving force behind the September 2004 state regulation requiring all newly trained teachers to complete a mentor component for permanent certification. By linking teachers new to the district with veterans, the intangible rewards of the NTA’s Teacher Center have proven to be a model of success.

Retirees 500 Strong

The Newburgh Teachers’ Association’s Retiree Chapter has grown to over 500 members this year. Although the majority of members still live in and around our school district, retirees can be found all across the United States. The Chapter sponsors various educational and social activities throughout the year. According to its constitution, its purpose is to align retired educators with an active organization which has influence and power to effect benefits for both active and retired educators through legislation and other action; to help active members plan for retirement; to work actively with the NTA in promoting the interest of children and educators. The Chapter is chaired by former NTA President and retired NTA member Frank Colone.

Callers from the February Bond Vote. We'll be up and running again for May's Budget and Board Election Vote. Seated front to back are: Marisol Malloy, Nydia Benitez-Nee, and Lori Crotty.

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NTA Benefit Trust Fund Round Up

The Teaching Assistant Chapter of the NTA ratified its first collective bargaining agreement past February, signifying the commitment of the District to recognize TAs as professionals.

The highlights of the agreement include:
• An average of 9% raise in salary this year and next year
• In-service salary credit and future discussions of in-service courses specifically designed for TAs
• Improved Sick Leave Buy Back language and retirement incentive

Modeled after the NTA’s Teachers’ Bargaining agreement, the historic document guarantees its purpose is to align retired educators with an active organization which has influence and power to effect benefits for both active and retired educators through legislation and other action; to help active members plan for retirement; to work actively with the NTA in promoting the interest of children and educators. The Chapter is chaired by former NTA President and retired NTA member Frank Colone.

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90 Credit Barrier Broken

NTA members may now receive pay for any credits earned over 90 thanks to the collaborative agreement ratified by the NTA Board of Directors and Superintendent Dr. Saturnelli this past January. The agreement stipulates that all members on the RA plus 90 of the salary schedule must get approval for all credits. To receive in-service credit, members must:
• Submit a letter of intent to the Superintendent at least 30 days prior to course beginning. Explain how the course will enhance your professional skills to assist student achievement in the classroom. Include signatures of approval by both the building principal and the subject area director.
• Include copies of the course description, name, address, and telephone number of the college/university and name, address, and telephone of the person to verify your attendance and completion of the course.
• Provide written verification of a successful completion of the course and hours in attendance.
• Send a copy of the completion documentation to Mrs. Mary Ellen Leimer in Human Resources and the NTA.

Credit will be granted for every fifteen hours for a pre-approved course that is successfully completed. Subject to ratification by the Board of Education, the agreement signifies the inherent value of educators continuing to supplement and hone their professional skills.

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Three for Two Pay Provision Upheld

Adult Education and Evening High School teachers recently had their pay status validated as true three-for-two teaching positions. The NTA’s intervention was necessitated when their pay was unilaterally cut by 33 percent in November after many years of working under this pay rule.

The three-for-two contract language ensures that teachers are compensated one hour of pay for every two hours taught in programs that are not covered by the contractual day. The NFA Twilight, elementary tutorials, extended day, and the Larkin Homework assistance program, as well as many other distinct work programs, are affected by this important clause.

“Working with the Superintendent on this issue was fantastic. Dr. Saturnelli was extremely supportive every step of the way,” commented NTA President Phil Cordella. The NTA and the District are currently attempting to correct the contract language that led to this confusion.

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At a recent recognition event are (1 to r): NTA President Philip Cordella, State Senator William Larkin, and State Assemblyman Kevin Cahill.