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Reconnect and Re-engage

It was nice to see so many of you this past September at our orientation day in Albany. Many people felt that they could have used extra time in programs that day to prepare for the new school year. That was made clear in feedback that you offered in the survey sent out by the administration. They have received that message and group gatherings will likely shift to later in the school year starting next year.

At orientation I called on everyone to reconnect with each other and to re-engage across the larger BOCES. That

is the idea of STRONGER TOGETHER. We have a larger impact in our programs, in Questar at large, and across the state when we stand united.

At the state level NYSUT has had many successes this year. This includes changes to APPR, some changes that push us closer to completely fixing tier 6, and legislation around temperature in schools to name a few. This year NYSUT continues to work on permanently restoring foundation aid and working on legislation around cell phones in schools and the harmful impact of social media on youth.

Here at Questar we will continue to advocate for you this year as we prepare to open the next round of negotiations next year. Look for ways to become involved including a series of member input meetings that will be held later this school year. We hope to hear from as many of you as possible regarding what your concerns and hopes are for the next contract.

Reach out to any of us on the board or your building rep for ideas on how you can be involved. If you are looking to be active

at the state level please check out the NYSUT website to become involved in the Fix Tier 6 effort or Vote Cope. At the very least, check out the member benefits section to see the way your Union membership can work for you!

Thank you for all that you do and take some time to enjoy the Autumn colors and activities that make this time of year special.

In Solidarity,

Joal Bova, President, RCG BOCES Teachers' Association

WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE GETTING ALL THAT YOU CAN OUT OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP. MAKE SURE YOU ARE RECEIVING COMMUNICATIONS FROM US THROUGH A PERSONAL EMAIL. CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT [HTTP://RCGBOCES.NY.AFT.ORG/](http://rcgboces.ny.aft.org/). FOLLOW US ON TWITTER, @BOCESRCG. IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY CREATED AN ONLINE ACCOUNT DO SO AT WWW.NYSUT.ORG. OUR LOCAL IS RCG BOCES TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION AND WE ARE LOCAL 10175. ONCE YOU LOG IN, YOU WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A VARIETY OF MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS.



The kickoff to a new school year has raised large discussions around student use of personal cell phones during the school day. A "Disconnected" Conference was held in late September to discuss the data around cell phone and other personal electronic use in the classroom and to discuss potential solutions.

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Main Concerns:

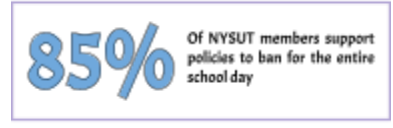
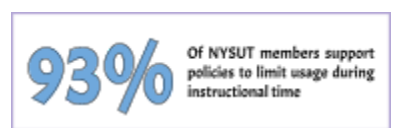
- Impacts student ability to focus and attend to lessons

- Decreases social interactions with classmates and teachers
- Hinders ability to engage in authentic learning experiences

Potential Solutions:

- Legislation to regulate social media platforms in potential exploitation of kids
- Statewide policies to restrict cell phone use where enforcement does not rest with teachers

Source: NYSUT COMMUNICATIONS



See the full article here:

<https://www.nysut.org/news/2024/September/disconnected-conference>

Community Helpers Day at Paul Puccio School at Maple Hill



On September 25, Paul Puccio School welcomed a number of community service members to visit with students. This included members of the Schodack Police Department, State Troopers, Schodack Fire Department, and the Rensselaer County Sheriff's Department. Students



learned about these community helpers in class throughout the week before having the opportunity to talk to these service members, explore their police cars and fire trucks, try on equipment, and watch a K9 demonstration. These positive interactions with community service members are so important for the population of students at Paul Puccio to learn that these service members are there to help them. If they first meet them in a scary situation, kids could be hesitant to trust and hide. Visits like this help students become comfortable with these amazing service members to help students and families when needed! Thank you to all involved in organizing and ensuring a successful day!

Written by: Erin Berschwinger




9.10 Professional Development Day

The Agency and the Association recognize that professional development is part of the regular responsibility of an employee and that attendance at particular conferences or the observation of other teaching situations may be of value to the Agency. Upon such a showing of value to the Agency and upon reasonable advance notice, in writing, the Executive Officer shall grant up to two days of leave without charge to other leave credits to an employee in each year of the term of this Agreement for the purpose of professional development. In considering such application, the Executive Officer may consider the fact that more than one employee has applied for leave for a particular conference or visit and the impact of the granting of the request has upon future ability of the Agency grant other requests. Upon return from such leave, the employee shall submit to the Executive Officer a report, in writing, of such visit or conference. The employee may be required by the Executive Officer to share his or her findings and report with the professional staff of the Agency.

Access our full contract here



<https://www.questar.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/teachers-21-26.pdf>



PEER SUPPORT LINE

Life is complicated. We can help.

The Peer Support Line is a partnership between NYSUT Member Benefits and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care offered at no cost to all NYSUT members and their families.

Staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals who understand the unique professional and personal challenges of NYSUT members, this confidential helpline provides answers, resources and empathetic support when you need it.

The Peer Support Line can help you access benefits through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and provide information and resources for professional assistance within your local community.

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The Peer Support Line can help with:

- Finding mental-health services and supports
- Managing work-related stress & personal challenges
- Providing support to new members
- Assisting with marital, relationship or child-rearing concerns & accessing caregiving resources
- Reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness

Don't go it alone.

When stressful situations arise, let the Peer Support Line help you find solutions. Our trained specialists will lend a caring ear and connect you with community resources that can make a difference for you and your family.

**For more information or assistance, call toll-free:
844-444-0152.**

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LIFE INSURANCE: *Crucial for protecting your loved ones*



Life insurance is a topic many people find confusing, complicated, and uncomfortable to think about. It is undoubtedly one of the most vital types of insurance products you can purchase, though. Whether you're looking into your first policy or to upgrade existing coverage, it's important to determine how much life insurance you need and which type is right for you.

One key fact about life insurance you may not be aware of is premiums are likely to be less expensive if you purchase it earlier in life. For those of you who currently have policies, what you purchased 10 years ago, five years ago, or even last year may not be enough to replace your income and all you provide for your family. And if you are part of the 30% of Americans who don't have any life insurance at all,* you could be putting your family at great financial risk.

There are a variety of options to consider when it comes to life insurance, including:

- 1. Term Life** – this product pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specific timeframe but offers no cash value.
- 2. Level Term Life** – this insurance is similar to term life but is normally for a set period of time such as 10, 15, or 20 years; it also offers no cash value.
- 3. Universal Life** – this option offers a way to protect your family while building tax-deferred cash value; policyholders can usually access a portion of the balance without impacting the guaranteed death benefit.

* Source: USA Today - <https://www.usatoday.com/money/blueprint/life-insurance/life-insurance-statistics>

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses a number of competitive life insurance programs (those listed to the left and others) available to NYSUT members and their spouse/certified domestic partner. Many of these plans offer reduced rates not available to the general public along with additional convenience and savings opportunities through payroll or pension deduction.

Learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed life insurance programs by scanning the QR code, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.



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