

WTU Update

Volume 25, Issue 4

January 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Colleague,

I hope that you had a restful vacation and that you enjoyed the holidays with your family and friends.

I want to thank all of you for your professionalism and all the hard work that you do each and every day for your students. You have proven that you are dedicated to your profession, despite the administration's continued attacks against teachers.

I would also like to thank all of you who have been attending school committee meetings, and I encourage more of you to attend these meetings in the future. Your attendance at the meetings will make the school committee feel your presence and allow us to demonstrate our strength in numbers. We must show that we are united, and a packed auditorium will accomplish that goal.

Finally, I want to wish you a happy, healthy, peaceful New Year!

Darlene Netcoh



UPDATES

Negotiations/Mediation

There will be a negotiations/mediation session on January 5, 2017. The two sides will meet again with Vincent Ragosta as the mediator. Only this type of a meeting will result in a successor collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

Interest Arbitration

As you know, interest arbitration began last December. In interest arbitration there is a panel of arbitrators. One arbitrator is impartial, or neutral, and the other two, one for each side, are partial. The panel listens to each side's arguments as each side provides witnesses to both support its case and refute the other side's case. After the school committee and superintendent have wasted over a year's worth of time and an exorbitant amount of tax payers' money, the question that one must ask is, "Are they going to be willing to accept the arbitrators' ruling?" If not, the question becomes, "Why?" Arbitration dates in the new year will begin on Saturday, January 7.

Court Proceedings

On December 15, 2016, the school department appeared before Judge Gallo to have him halt the grievance arbitration that was to occur on December 21. This arbitration was to be for the violation of the layoff language in the CBA. Although Judge Gallo granted the motion to halt the grievance arbitration for the layoff violation, we still have this issue before the SLRB and, in a separate case, Judge Gallo. The school department

is arguing that there has been a substantial reduction in student population so it can lay off as many teachers as it wants. Despite our evidence that student enrollment declined only by 1.5% last year and that the decline in the teaching staff has kept pace with the decline in student enrollment over the past ten years, Gallo still granted the motion.

Grievance Arbitration

Grievances that are not resolved with the superintendent result in grievance arbitrations. Each side agrees on a neutral arbitrator who hears the case. These arbitrations usually last only one day, although the hearing on the violation of the chronically disruptive student language lasted for two days. We recently won a grievance arbitration. The arbitrator ruled that the administrators at Aldrich last year did violate the contract when they created special "Homework Homerooms" for eight teachers there. We also settled two grievances before they went to arbitration. In one, a teacher was denied a sixth class, and the administration agreed to pay her. In another, the administration admitted that the maximum number of students in technology and art classes was violated, so the teachers will receive payment for the overages. We currently have twenty-four grievances in various stages of the arbitration process. **We will continue to fight the school committee's constant attacks. Hopefully, the members of the school committee will do their job and negotiate a successor CBA.**

WTU 25 WEEK CLUB

We would like to thank all the members who joined the 25 Week Club. Also, we would like to thank the building reps for collecting and distributing the materials. If you have joined the 25 Week Club and would like a donation, please send us a letter in writing with your request. Send your request to the Union office in care of Julie Connors-Costello/Pauline Pinto. The drawings will be held after the school vacation.

Thank you,
Julie Connors-Costello
Pauline Pinto
Co-Chairwomen
25 Week Club

AFT OFFERS GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply for the 2017 Robert G. Porter Scholarship Program. AFT members and their children are eligible to participate in the program, which awards four \$8,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors and awards \$1,000 grants to AFT members who are continuing their education.

TO APPLY:

- Applications are now available online. The deadline for application is March 31, 2017.
- Download the application from the AFT website at go.aft.org/scholarships.
- E-mail an application request to porterscholars@aft.org.

UNITED WAY SUCCESSFUL AGAIN

Warwick teachers once again have demonstrated their commitment to helping those less fortunate. This year's total for the WTU United Way campaign was \$6,109.00. We certainly want to extend a special thank you to all those who participated in this year's campaign.

Our annual United Way incentive drawings were conducted at the December General Membership Meeting. The winners of the gift certificates are as follows: Michael Sollitto-Toll Gate High School-\$25.00 Gift Certificate to the Greenwood Inn, Elaine May-Toll Gate High School -\$25.00 Gift Certificate to the Greenwood Inn, Paula Regan-Norwood Elementary School-\$25.00 Gift Certificate to Greggs, John Paolino-Greenwood Elementary School-\$25.00 to Gregg's, June Marchant, Hoxsie Elementary School-\$25.00 to Newport Art Museum.

PENSION BENEFICIARY

It is very important to keep your beneficiary information updated. Remember, you have both a defined benefit pension and a defined contribution account. Be sure to update your beneficiary on both of them.

You can access your records with the Employee Retirement System of Rhode Island.

You may contact ERSRI by telephone at 462-7600 or at their website, www.ersri.org.

PLEASE NOTE



Jan. 02-Office Closed

**Jan. 04-WTU Executive Board Meeting
3:30 p.m.**

Jan. 16-Office Closed



**Jan. 18-Building Rep. Meeting
3:30 p.m.
Winman**

WTU FAX NO. 739-2287 WTU PHONE NO. 739-2260

**WEBSITE:
warwickteachersunion.org**

WTU EXECUTIVE BOARD

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WTU Update is a publication of the Warwick Teachers Union, Local 915, AFT, RIFTHP, AFL-CIO