



THE UNION SOUND

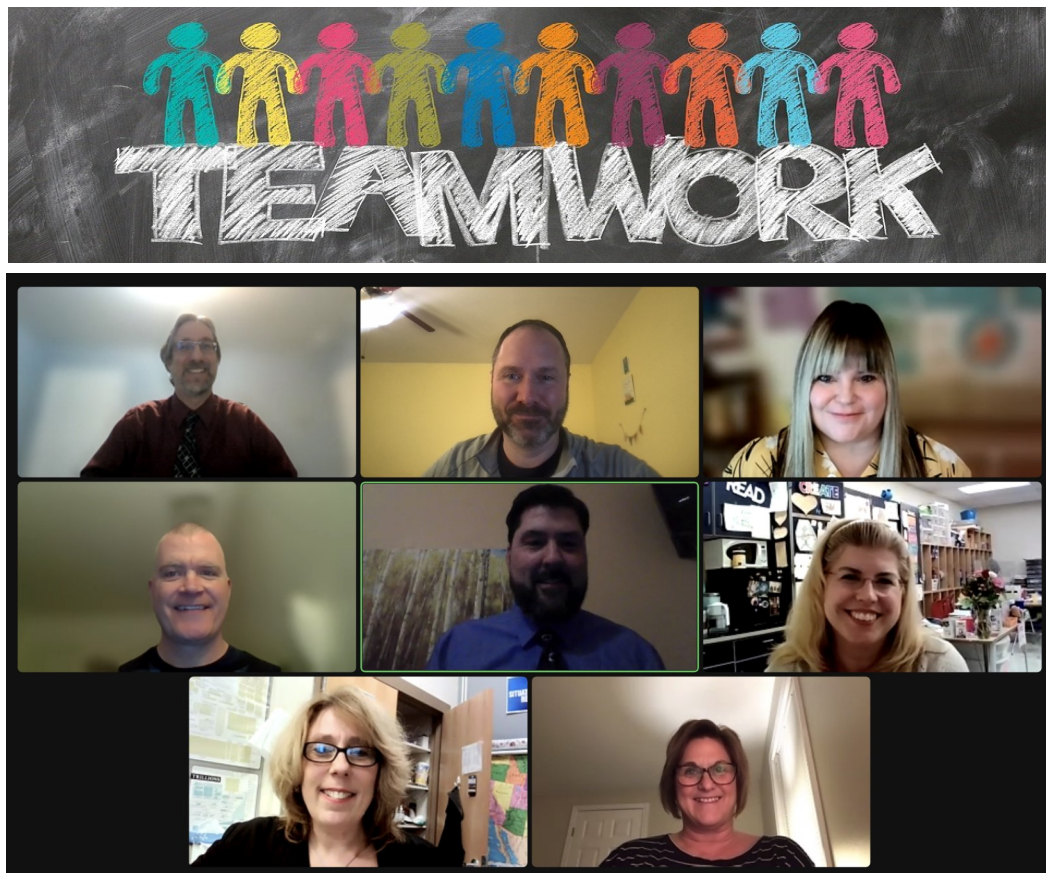
THE VOICE OF A SOUND UNION



Jan./Feb. 2022

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

Volume 46, Issue 3



Top Row: *Joe Catalfomo, Jake Maloney, Deb Ricci*; Middle Row: *Andrew Gillis, Rob McDonough, Jennifer Husta*; Bottom Row: *Dorothy Mayone, Robin DePen*

by Robert McDonough

Tonight, the teachers contract was ratified by the Board of Education after the teachers ratified it a couple weeks ago. It is a five-year deal that takes us to June 30, 2027. This was my fourth round of teacher contract negotiations, and my first as RVF president. Back in 2012, I served on my first TNT (Teachers Negotiations Team) and the labor-management relationship was in a very different place. Those of you who have been here long enough to remember might recall the time we went two years without a contract, taking zero percent raises for those years. I remember coming to the table, often until 11pm just to slide our chairs back, get up and walk out on the district. And there were meetings where the district would walk out on us. This went on for two years with no improvement, and no retro pay when we finally settled a contract. The district would use this tension as a stall tactic so they wouldn't have to give us the raises we deserved. Previous superintendents wouldn't even attend negotiations themselves but would send the district's attorney to the table instead. You could cut the tension in the room with a knife as you felt the glares from across the table from people that didn't understand our profession.

Continued on Page 2



IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Message by Robert McDonough	1-2
Member Information Alert by Tara Thibault-Edmonds	3
NYSUT ELT Courses Graphic by NYSUT	3

The Union Sound

Editor-in-Chief:
Robyn McDonough

Assistant Editors:
Jennifer Slauson,
Tara Thibault-Edmonds,
Colleen Vitti

President:
Robert McDonough

Contributors:
Robert McDonough,
Tara Thibault-Edmonds

President's Message, cont.

This all changed when our current superintendent started his tenure here in Rondout Valley. When Dr. Morgan first arrived, our contract was expiring and in his first year, we were already entrenched in negotiations. He told the TNT that he believes in something called "Interest Based Bargaining" (IBB) and he would be at the table himself. At the time, we never heard of it, let alone ever used it. He explained that it requires training and it's a method where, instead of two separate adversarial teams sitting on different sides of the table, we sit mixed around the table acting as one team trying to solve problems together. Instead of "positions" and "proposals," teams introduce "interests" or "issues" and each person on the team tries to offer viable solutions to the problems. You evaluate each solution as a team and agree upon which ones are acceptable to both sides.

At the time we heard this, we were coming out of a decade of a labor-management relationship that was tattered by lack of respect and a climate of mistrust. We didn't know if this new style of negotiating would work. But we decided to give it a shot, and in his first negotiations as our new superintendent he went to work on repairing the relationship that was injured for so long. Instead of bargaining sessions going long into the night after a hard day's work, he offered professional days to the team to negotiate during the work day. The district and the RVF shared the expense of buying lunch each day, buying lunch two days each. Whatever happened at the table prior to lunch, both teams put that to the side and ate together around the table. There was an atmosphere of mutual respect instead of the mistrust of the past. We all got to know each other as human beings. And three days later, back in the spring of 2019, we had a four-year deal that included retro pay for 2018.

Two years ago, we negotiated an agreement for the secretary contract the same way. And in this current round of negotiations for the teachers, it was no different. We again came to the table as one team. Dr. Morgan and I put our teams through the training, and three days later we had a deal. Not two years. Three days.

While the last two years have been the most difficult and emotional times in educational history, and I know that we are all beyond overwhelmed, I also realize how far we have come in such a short time as a union. And the labor-management relationship the superintendent and I have built has allowed the two of us to work as a team to solve problems. We use the IBB method to work out issues nearly every day. The efficient relationship we created

allows for effective labor-management collaboration even in non-bargaining years.

I realize that many of you are stressed to the max these past couple years. But for the new RVF members that don't know the history, and for those of you that have been here long enough to remember the history, I am thankful we finally have a superintendent and Board of Education that treats us with the respect and dignity we deserve. While the pandemic has created more stress in this profession, our functional labor-management relations during this time have simultaneously provided relief to our work lives in many other ways.

I want to thank my team, as they had to buy into this process and work hard. IBB is not a magical process. Some places that try to use it quickly see it fall apart if the dynamics aren't right. It takes hard work to build relationships and work through the problems together. It can be a slow process at times and takes patience and dedication for it to work. And your TNT did just that.

A special thank you to the team you all elected: Jennifer Husta, Robin DePew, Andrew Gillis, Joseph Catalfomo, Debra Ricci, Jacob Maloney, and Dorothy Mayone.

I am now in the midst of another round of negotiations with our paraprofessional unit, and I look forward to using this process to also get them a fair deal that they deserve. Thank you for your support, and please keep the para team in mind as we go into negotiations with the district in a few weeks.

Thank you all for the mountains you've moved over these past two years. It's your hard work that we highlighted in negotiations and it's your hard work that got us a good teachers contract for the next half decade. Keep up the good work and let's stay strong together!



Member Information Alert

by Tara Thibault-Edmonds

NAVIGATING CTLE REQUIREMENTS FOR NYSED

The past year has brought many challenges in education, and as we roll through the 2021-22 school year, we are presented with another: school staff with professional certificates must verify their participation in continuing teacher and leader education (CTLE) and re-register with the New York State Education Department.

Many of you will remember navigating through the first registration process, which was codified in law in 2015. While [all certified school staff](#) must register with NYSED every five years under this law, it is teachers, school leaders, and level III teaching assistants who earned their certification after Feb. 2, 2004 who are [specifically subject](#) to the 100-hour CTLE requirement. This date marked the dividing line between educators who were awarded permanent certificates and those who received the newly designated professional credentials.

While the process may seem complicated, there are many resources available to help make sense of it. NYSED has a webpage [here](#) that provides links to lists of approved CTLE sponsors, resources for recordkeeping and [documentation of hours](#), and explanations of acceptable learning activities. Rondout Valley CSD is now an approved provider of CTLE, and many workshops provided in-district can qualify toward re-registration. NYSUT prepared an [FAQ page](#) in 2015 that laid out the certification requirements ahead of the implementation of the new law.

Some educators were surprised by the embedded requirement for the completion of 15%, or up to 15 hours, of language acquisition CTLE. Such courses address the specific needs of English language learners in our schools and their diverse educational needs. Many

organizations have developed excellent programming and workshops to fill this gap, including the NYSUT [Education and Learning Trust](#), [edWeb.net](#), the Hudson Valley Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network ([RBERN](#)), and Ulster BOCES.

It is important to note that **some CTLE hours can also qualify for earned salary increase** under the District's new guidelines for **both teachers and teaching assistants**. Previously, staff were required to complete 15-hour courses in order to earn one in-service credit, but now shorter courses can be grouped together to build a 15-hour block. With prior approval in MyLearningPlan, a course of any length can be taken for the purpose of in-service credit, and if it meets the NYSED CTLE requirements, it can fill that need as well. RVF representatives will work to answer any questions you may have about this process, so reach out if you find yourself confused.

As we move through the spring, summer, and fall, certified educators should receive notices from NYSED's TEACH system reminding you of your re-registration deadlines. Since everyone was required to first register during his/her birth month, notices should come at six months, three months, and one month prior to the registrant's birthday. Newly-certified educators should note your registration date and continuously work on CTLE to be ready when the five-year mark rolls around.

Though it may seem daunting at first, proper record-keeping can ease any anxiety this process creates. Print completion certificates out of MyLearningPlan, collect documentation from any courses you take or in-person workshops you attend, and keep it all in a binder, folder, or digitize it for your records. With proper planning, your responsibility to maintain your certification will be much less intimidating and much more like a simple chore.



Check out all your union membership has to offer!

INSURANCE YOU CAN COUNT ON.

PROVIDERS YOU CAN TRUST.

VALUE-ADDED EXTRAS YOU CAN'T GET ELSEWHERE.

SOMEONE WHO HAS YOUR BACK.

NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!

When it comes to protecting yourself, your loved ones, your income or your most valuable possessions, NYSUT Member Benefits has insurance programs that fit the bill. Whether you are looking for **auto & home, life, disability, long-term care, dental, vision, or pet insurance**, there is a Member Benefits-endorsed plan that may be of assistance featuring value-added extras unavailable to the public.

Get started by first bookmarking the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org. There, you will find numerous tools and resources available to you as a NYSUT member – including a **Financial Learning Center** with articles designed to help educate you on financial decisions and topics.

Member Benefits also endorses several discounted shopping programs that can help you save on both everyday and more expensive purchases. Finally, if you ever have an issue or problem when using a Member Benefits program, our staff take great pride in their ability to quickly assist members with any concerns that may arise.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101** to learn more about the endorsed programs and services available to you through your union membership.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,
visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or
calling **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Jan/Feb 2022