

FIGHTING AGAINST THE ISSUES WITH THE NYS GRADE 3-8 ELA AND MATH EXAMS

By Carene Domato/MVFT President



L-R: Jeanne Casino, Keith McCall, Carene Domato, Tashi Campbell-Tulloch, Christine Ceglie-laffaldano outside the NYSUT RA helping NYSUT kick-off its #correctthetest campaign.

Many of us watched our students suffer through this year's K-8 state exams. The state tried to placate the Opt-Out movement by making it a 2-day, untimed exam, allowing students to suffer hour after hour because they wanted to do their best. The tests are flawed! They are too long, inappropriate for the age of children being tested, the cut scores are invalid and mislabel our students setting them up to feel like failures!

Those students who piloted the exam on the computer were tortured as well! Students throughout the state, including here in Mt. Vernon, were unable to log on the first day of the test because the testing company could not handle the volume of students attempting to use the system. It was a total debacle! If the feds are going to withhold our funding if we don't test our children, then for the sake of our children—opt them out or correct the tests!!!

I'M STICKING WITH MY UNION, HOW ABOUT YOU?

By Carene Domato/MVFT President

It seems hard to believe that another school year has gone by and it is amazing to know we made it through no worse for the wear. If we take the time to look back at what we were able to accomplish this year, we should all be proud of ourselves!



We began the year determined to make a difference in the lives of our students, our friends and colleagues, our school and community, and if we stayed the course, maybe even our profession. We even tried, when tested daily, to keep the faith that the next day would be better.

It takes a very special person to do what we do, and no matter how often we find it necessary to defend what we are committed to do each day, we continue to prove to the nay-sayers that these are the noblest of all professions. Our teachers and teaching assistants give our students their best in order to secure their futures. Our security monitors are our front line of defense, giving our students a safe place to learn. Each of you makes the MVFT stronger every day because you ARE the MVFT and without you doing what is right by our students each day, we are nothing!

You allow your leadership to fight for your rights and protect what the MVFT that came before us, fought so hard for. You came out in January by the hundreds to ratify your contract and solidify those rights. You stood together each time those rights were threatened, and you were victorious every step of the way.

This being my first year as your President, I would like to thank all the proud members of the MVFT for your strength, unity and support. Your trust has given me the confidence to know that when I stand up against those who would take from us what is rightfully ours, I do NOT stand alone.

Have a well-deserved, restful summer!

MVFT DELEGATES OF NYSUT RA PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE MEMBERS OF THE MVFT

For the next five years the NYSUT Representative Assembly (RA) will be held at the Albany Capital Center in order to save travel costs for all NYSUT locals. The 47th annual RA held on May 3-4, moved swiftly through resolutions and committees to make sure all orders of business were finished by the end of the 2-day condensed convention. The MVFT co-authored two resolutions for the first time this year, regarding receivership and rights of immigrants, that were unanimously passed by the body of delegates.

During the first NYSUT RA, since anti-union forces attempted, but failed, to use the U.S. Supreme Court to deliver a blow to the nation's labor movement, labor leaders urged delegates to not take anything for granted and continue fighting for their economic futures and rights on the job. "We avoided significant drops so far in membership here in New York," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "But our enemies are just getting started... We've got to stay vigilant."



L-R: Keith McCall, Carene Domato, Jacqueline Simone, Anita Amieiro, Tashi Campbell-Tulloch, Christine Ceglie-laffaldano.

IS A UNION BUSTER REACHING OUT TO YOU?

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

QUESTION:

Who is New Choice NY and why are they contacting me?

ANSWER:

They are a union-busting organization funded by billionaires like Betsy DeVos and her family as part of their campaign to undermine collective bargaining. They want to limit the voices of teachers and working people so that they can more easily push their anti-union, anti-public services agenda.

QUESTION:

Why are they asking me to drop my membership?

ANSWER:

Simple. They want to divide us! They just don't want us to be able to stand up for ourselves, our schools and our communities. They don't like unions. They don't like your contract. They don't like educators and staff fighting for more school funding.

When we are divided, they can push their agenda more easily, which includes:

- Opposing funding for public education and public services.
- Supporting school privatization and vouchers.
- Pushing standardized tests and tying teacher salaries to test scores.
- Opposing raises for educators and opposing a higher minimum wage.

QUESTION:

What can I do when they come to my door?

ANSWER:

First of all, ask them to identify themselves. These are paid canvassers — demand to know who they are and who's paying them to bust unions. You can tell them you stand with your co-workers and your students, NOT with big-money interests. Then, after they leave empty-handed, let us know who contacted you. Email unionbusters@nysutmail.org to report them so we can know what the union busters are up to. Finally, spread the word among your colleagues and remind them that we are stronger when we stick together and defend our union.

QUESTION:

What if I saw this flier too late and already dropped my membership?

ANSWER:

Don't worry, you are not alone. Their field agents are well trained to convince people to drop their membership without revealing their true agenda. But it is easy for you to come back and stand with your co-workers. Call your local president or call NYSUT at **518-213-6490** to rejoin your co-workers and stand up for our voice, our values, our union.

REPORT UNION BUSTING AT:
www.nysut.org/unionbusters
518-213-6490
unionbusters@nysutmail.org

COMMITTEE OF 100: NYSUT ACTIVISTS TELL LAWMAKERS:

“IT’S JUST NOT ENOUGH”

By Carene Domato/MVFT President



L-R: Tashi Campbell-Tulloch, Carene Domato, Senator Jamal Bailey, YFT Lea Danon, YFT Kara Popiel

On March 3rd more than 700 NYSUT grassroots lobbyists along with MVFT President Carene Domato and newly appointed MVFT Political Action Coordinator, Tashi Campbell-Tulloch, waited in long lines at security at the Albany Capitol jammed, overcrowded elevators and elbowed their way through the hallways to get to standing-room-only meetings with legislators to let them know “that it ain’t enough!” The property tax cap makes budgeting especially difficult for needy districts like ours. Lawmakers were strongly urged to reject the Governor’s plan to make the tax cap permanent. We discussed at length the detriment charter schools have upon our school district. Senator Bailey was surprised to learn that Mt. Vernon City School District pays out close to \$17 million in tuition to 13 different charter schools. The impact becomes increasingly devastating to the students and families who stay committed to our neighborhood public schools. Lobbyists also discussed issues with the APPR and state testing, as well as other short falls in the Governor’s proposed budget.

UNION MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

By Keith McCall

Did you know that there are over 50 endorsed services & programs available to you simply because you are a member of the MVFT? The reason is because the MVFT is affiliated with NYSUT. With well over 600,000 members, NYSUT has negotiated huge discounts with service providers and offers programs that are beneficial to its members. Many programs offer the option of payroll or pension deduction. Some of the programs/services offered are:

- Insurance- Auto, Home, Pet
- Will & Estate Planning Services
- Life Insurance & Long-Term Care Insurance
- Discounts on Travel & Shopping
- Financial & Credit Counseling

For more information please contact the NYSUT Member Benefits office at 1-800-626-8101 or memberbenefits.nysut.org

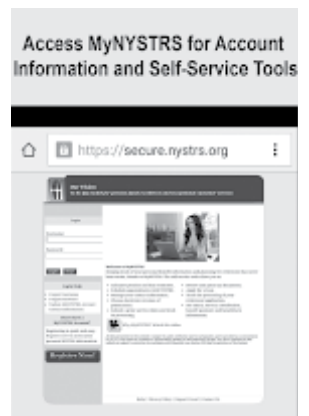
NYSTRS

DOWNLOAD YOUR NYSTRS APP TODAY

The NYSTRS Mobile App helps public school teachers in New York plan for the future. With this app, members of the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System can:

- Access individual account information and self-service tools
- Stay on top of the latest system news
- Get questions answered on a variety of retirement-related topics
- Determine pension eligibility by tier of membership
- Find schedules and directions for seminars and consultations
- Begin the countdown to retirement!

As of August 1, 2019, the NYSTRS Retiree Convention Delegates 2019–2021 are: Carene Domato, Jeanne Casino, Anita Amieiro, and Keith McCall.



Front L-R: Sharon Lewis, Carolyn Bartee, Carene Domato, Deborah Thompson, Jacqueline Simone Back L-R: Yvonne Smith, Shondu Young, Denise Coates, Jeanne Casino, Jemel Pace, Jason Lyn, Auphy Dixon, David Watson

MVFT security monitors attended ‘Meet N Greet,’ hosted by the MVFT at Hamilton School on April 9th. Close to 20 security monitors attended and were given the opportunity to share their ideas on how the MVFT can best support them. Jarvis Grantham, District Risk Manager, presented “the ins and outs” of worker’s comp, at the request of the security monitors. Refreshments and comradery were shared by all.

SPOTLIGHT



Parker School had their annual Career Day on March 19th. People of all different careers came and spoke to our students about their lines of work and to stress the importance of education. This special day was spearheaded by teachers Simone Oliver and Saroya Brown.



Parker School had its annual Princesses of Peace tea party. Simone Oliver, second grade teacher, and the young ladies invited their teachers to an afternoon of elegance.

Graham School Pre-K has been given a grant for the children to have a yoga class once a week. The students and teachers are really enjoying themselves!

“MOUNT VERNON EDUCATORS CHANGE THE WORLD ONE TEACHER AT A TIME”

Ann Marie Gilligan, teacher at Traphagen School, is participating this summer in a 200-hour Wellness and Yoga Teacher Training in NYC, specifically designed for educators by the organization Breathe for Change. By completing the 18-day training, participants will be Certified Yoga Teachers (CYT-200) and are eligible to become internationally recognized Registered Yoga Teachers (RYT-200) through Yoga Alliance. In addition, holders of the certificate can lead wellness and social emotional learning programs for students, colleagues, and community members. If you are interested in learning more and perhaps joining Ann Marie in this training, please check out www.breatheforchange.com or email her at agilligan@mtvernoncsd.org.



L-R: Kevin Middleton, STEAM Class of 2021, Frank Claro

The MV STEAM Academy is blasting off with their NASA inspired Class of 2021 hoodies. Science and Arts coming together and looking fierce! STEAM sophomore class pictured here along with dynamic STEAM Social Studies Teacher, Frank Claro, and newly appointed co-advisor STEAM English Teacher, Kevin Middleton. Ironically, Frank was Kevin's class advisor at Thornton HS in 2011, and now they work as a team!

HIGH SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

By Rich Suozzo

With the school year rapidly coming to a close it is time to recognize some of the staff at MVHS who have donated their time to help our students and make MVHS the place to be.

Many thanks go out to Mr. Roopchand who has spent countless hours on school beautification by decorating all of the bulletin boards with college information and inspirational quotes. He has also kept the school up to date with his colorful morning announcements featuring staff and student accomplishments as well as introducing "The Knight of the Day" which each day highlights a staff member.

Miss Giusti has done her share to help our ENL population by enlisting a group of students to tutor other students in their native language. Students are being prepped for Regents Exams in Spanish, Arabic, French and Portuguese. It has proven to be very successful and a big thank you goes out to Miss Giusti and her tutors for their hard work.

Special thanks also go out to all the teachers and teaching assistants in the Life Skills Program for putting together the Annual Prom for their students this June. The MVFT is proud to assist in this great event and we wish the students a tremendous night of fun!

Miss Robin Carpus leads the Science Club which takes care of our greenhouse, she also runs the "Adopt a Park" Program at Wilson Woods and their annual trout release program which put 62 new fish into the Pound Ridge Reservation. Congratulations to the Science Club for a job well done.

Our security members have done an excellent job this year. Their job is strenuous and demanding and we are grateful to them for keeping our students and staff safe.

I would also like to recognize our teaching assistants who are a vital part of the academic progress that we are making at MVHS. They go above and beyond their job description and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a healthy and relaxing summer. It is a time for you to unwind and rest up for what will be another challenging school year starting in September. Work on your golf game, sit by the pool, get some exercise, or just do nothing; but make sure you have fun. See you in September.

Congratulations to the PTA Honorees 2019

Mailyn Irizarry, *Amani Charter School*

Jeffrey Knott, *Rebecca Turner Elementary School*

Faryn Goidel, *Pennington School*

Kimara Atterberry, *Columbus School*

Noel Campbell, *Benjamin Turner MS*

Annabelle Strozza, *Graham School*

Jasmine Burns, *Grimes School*

Annette Hamill, *Lincoln School*

Lisa Celzo, *Williams*

Gary Molinaro, *Hamilton School*

Joseph Galgano, *Traphagen School*

Marybeth Rhodes, *MV STEAM Academy*

Diana O'Sullivan, *Parker School*

Yuri White, *MVCSD*

Mike Malocsay, *Mount Vernon High School*

Monique Brown-Lee, *Holmes School*

Sheba Sherna, *Mandela-Zollicoffer High School*

Chinsha Chance, *Thornton HS/PVAM*

MVFT FRANK PANDOLFO MEMORIAL MEMBERS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Eric Alcalde

Therese Becker

Markia Bell

Amanda Mae Bendlin

Nia Foster

Gabriella Gleason

Daniel Jean

Marcus Langley-Furs

Faith Malocsay

Ryan Velazquez

Mia Wilbekin

CHECKS AND BALANCES

By Angelique Perez, MVFT Treasurer

As you may or may not know, NYSUT and AFT have guideline recommendations on how to safeguard your union dues. I would like to share the financial controls we at the MVFT have in place that correspond to the NYSUT/AFT guidelines.

Open lines of communication between the President and Treasurer

We have a great rapport at the office. Carene Domato and I discuss all financial matters regularly. We also include Jeanne Casino (VP) in these dialogues.

NYSUT recommends two signatures on all checks

We have had this practice for many years, I'm proud to say! Chase Bank has three authorized signatures on file for the MVFT: Carene Domato, Jeanne Casino and Angelique Perez.

In addition, we make a photocopy of every check we write and attach receipts; these are all kept on file and are used as part of our annual independent audit done by David Walowitz, our CPA.

Bank accounts reconciled monthly

Since I have been treasurer, the bank statements are always reconciled, and I am thankful to my mentor Cesar Matanzo who worked very diligently with me to perfect this skill. These statements are also submitted to our CPA for audit.

Timely deposits

All deposits of dues are made immediately upon receipt as are donations we collect for the many initiatives in which we are involved.

No checks made out to "cash"

We have never and will never make a check payable to cash. We reimburse our MVFT delegates for expenses they may have incurred performing their union work. However, all expenses must be accompanied with a receipt, presented for discussion and voted on for approval.

Maintain all canceled checks and voided checks

The check number on a voided check must match the sequence number in the stub section of the check book. This is also submitted to our CPA as part of the annual audit.

In conclusion, our financial controls here at the MVFT have been excellent and this good financial practice will stay in place to ensure the safety of your dues!

MVFT WELFARE FUND NEWS

By Karen Molinaro, Fund Administrator

As of July 1, 2019, the dental schedule will be increased please see www.asonet.com for details.

Effective September 1, 2019 all active Welfare Fund members and retirees who continue their benefits through the "Plus" plan, will have access to a Financial Planning benefit being offered through Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. More details will follow.

Remember that the deadline to submit a claim to the MVFT Welfare Fund for medical and/or prescription co-pay reimbursement (for SWSCHP members only) is June 30, 2019 for all co-pays incurred between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. The benefit pays up to \$200 per individual/\$400 per family.

Children between the ages of 19 and 23 are only considered eligible dependents if they are full time (12 credits or more) students. If your child ceases to be an eligible dependent status due to not maintaining full time student status, or graduation, OR s/he turns 23, you have sixty (60) days from the qualifying event to request continuation of coverage through COBRA. After 60 days from your child losing his/her dependent status, continuation of benefits will not be available.

MVFT SUMMER HOURS

Monday-Thursdays

9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The office will be closed between July 29th and August 2nd and will reopen on Monday, August 5th.



SRP Day at MVHS

RETIREE NEWS . . .

By Karen Wallace



(L-R) Seated: Vera Glazewski, Rick Castellitto, Gayle Wyckoff, Joanne Cathcart, Standing: Anne Marie Kiernan, Marilyn Pirozzi, Bob Fetonti, Maureen Palumbo, Irene Boykin, Pat Griffin, Anne Myers, Margaret Mahoney, Marilyn Felder, Karen Wallace, Maz Hogan. Not pictured: Cynthia Teiko, Brenda Warner, Jeff Yonkers, Katherine O'Toole

MOVING FORWARD

The MVFT Retiree Chapter has been meeting consistently for two years: assisting in political action, contributing time and money to the Holiday Initiative, Ronald McDonald House, and the Food Drive. Retirees are a great resource for our community, and many want to contribute their time and talent as well as work with dear colleagues and friends.

Our plan has been to start with a few committees and grow slowly. Now is the time. We are ready to move forward! At the meeting on April 24th we formed two new committees to take the next steps in expanding our chapter. (Minutes of that meeting were emailed.) If you would like to join any committee, please contact Karen Wallace, kkwallace312@gmail.com.

MVFT RETIREE CHAPTER CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE:

Committee Members: Rick Castellitto, Vera Glazewski, Bob Fetonti, Jeff Yonkers, Anne Marie Kiernan, Maureen Palumbo, Pat Griffin, Marilyn Pirozzi, Carl Caprio, Cesar Matanzo.

In order to be a registered chapter with NYSUT and AFT, The MVFT Retiree Chapter must have a constitution and officers. The committee met on May 21st and June 5th to write the constitution (guidelines provided by NYSUT) and address the issues of dues, election of officers, retiree representative on the executive board and membership. The MVFT Retiree Chapter constitution will be presented in the fall for review and ratification by email.

SEMINARS/FIELD TRIPS/SOCIAL GATHERINGS:

Gayle Wyckoff, *Chairperson*

Committee Members: Bob Fetonti, Joanne Cathcart, Vera Glazewski, Karen Wallace, Maeve Nolan, Damali Murray

The committee met on May 8th to plan and discuss:

September 2019: Brunch at Maggie Spillane's on the first day of classes. (Tentatively, Sept. 5)

October 2019: Chapter Meeting with NYSUT presenters covering benefits and financial planning for seniors. Date TBA

Fall 2019: Tour of Untermyer Garden and Park, Yonkers. Date TBA

April 2020: Chapter Meeting with historic documentary film presentation. Date TBA

Spring 2020: River Rose Cruise on the Hudson River. Date TBA

SCARVES FOR KIDS: MAZ HOGAN, CHAIRPERSON

In December 2018 the retirees of the MVCSD (with help from friends and family) distributed 470+ scarves to the holiday initiative for students experiencing homelessness in MVCSD. We need your help for the next drive. Scarves may be knitted, crocheted, fleece cut, or purchased. They should be delivered to the MVFT Office at 22 West First Street, #302, Mount Vernon, NY 10550, Attn: Maz Hogan. They may also be delivered to building reps. If you can't knit, crochet, etc. you may like to send a check to the MVFT Office marked scarf initiative.

MVFT COMMUNICATION VIA EMAIL AND THE AGENDA

Not receiving emails from the retiree chapter? Send your email address to Karen Wallace at kkwallace312@gmail.com. Communication from the MVFTRC will be through email and the MVFT newsletter, *The Agenda*. If you do not have access to email, send a written request for a hard copy to: MVFTRC, Attn: Karen Wallace, 22 West First Street, Suite #303, Mount Vernon, NY 10550. Include name and mailing address.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

By Anita Amieiro, Secretary

GET WELL WISHES

- Warren Nixon (Parker)
- Deborah Thompson (Columbus)
- Carleen Rogers (Williams)
- Chelsea Griffiths (RTES)
- Mike Malocsay (MVHS)
- Lori Costello (Lincoln)
- Nakia Hiland (Pennington)
- Laurie Lee-Miller (Williams)
- Andrea Hyatt-Copeland (Parker)



WELCOME BACK

- Colleen Cioffi (Parker)
- Laurie Lee-Miller (Williams)
- Jeffrey Knox (RTES)

BIRTHS

- Nia Dlugon (Lincoln) Son
- Brian Squillace (MVHS) Daughter
- Patrice Lee (Graham) Son
- Michael Pompa (Grimes) Son
- Maria Neto (Thornton) Granddaughter
- Jeanne Kennedy (Retiree) Grandson



CONGRATULATIONS

- Kristen Diaz (RTEZ) Engagement
- Mekiyah Knox (Grimes) BA in Sociology
- Lisa Celzo (Williams) 30 Years Teaching
- Denisha Hawkins (Pennington) Masters
- Terri Roberson (Pennington) Daughter's BA

CONDOLENCES

- Sidney Pryor (Retiree) Wife
- Adelaide Viggiano (Retiree) Sister
- Jennifer Brown (Parker) Brother
- Mike Jernegons (Graham) Mother
- Pat Battles (MVHS) Sister
- Diane Nero (Lincoln/Grimes) Brother
- Monique Brower (Pennington) Mother
- Margaret Brown (Pennington) Brother
- Anthony Ferrante (Retiree) Mother
- Susan Marie Stanton (Retiree) Father
- Elyse Hintzen (Retiree) Stepmother
- Lynne Pierce-Tagliapietra (Retiree) To Her Family

Membership	
Active	1137
Leave	26
Retiree	573

A special congratulations from the MVFT to PAT DUGGAN, Pre K-8 VP, who will be retiring this year after 37 years of teaching. She has spent the last thirty years teaching science at AB Davis Middle School, now STEAM Academy. Not only have her students benefited from Pat's commitment to teaching, she has been an invaluable leader with the MVFT for the past fifteen years. Pat has overcome many challenges in her life and has survived and stood tall through it all. She will be greatly missed by many. We wish her a well-deserved, healthy and happy retirement.



Congratulations to Retirees

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Linda Altier | Maria Laurino | Marla Robins |
| Cathy Bayliss | Linda Murray | Felicia Ruberto |
| Catherine Consolazio | Lawrence Nangle | William Rundle |
| John DeLuca | Thomas Nardoizzi | Sandra Sawyer |
| Patricia Duggan | Claudine Nembhard | Joanne Smith |
| April Fraulo | Bennut Nu | Susan Marie Stanton |
| Theresa Gamerota | Toni Parson | Natalina Surace |
| Rodney Garrett | Andrianna Reppert | Barbara Sutherland |
| Annette Hamill | Juliet Riggs | Barbara Urbinelli |
| Dawn Jackson | | |

EXECUTIVE BOARD BUILDING REPS

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Carene Domato
<i>President</i> | Jhanice McDonald #1 | Marcus Green #10 |
| Jeanne Casino
<i>Vice President, Grievance Chair</i> | Jessica Pizzuti #1 | Deborah Thompson #10 |
| Angelique Perez
<i>Treasurer</i> | Toba Duggan #2 | Monique Bell #12 |
| Anita Amieiro
<i>Secretary</i> | Modesta Curzio-Spies #2 | Annette Coppola #12 |
| Karl Nifontoff
<i>High School VP</i> | Diana O'Sullivan #4 | Greg Vandecarr #13 |
| Richard Suozzo
<i>High School VP</i> | Shawn Harper-Tarrant #4 | Aret Ishan #13 |
| Christine Ceglio
<i>PreK-8 VP</i> | Thalia Langley #5 | Nicole White Lee #14 |
| Patricia Duggan
<i>PreK-8 VP</i> | Marcia Wint #5 | Charissa Ayala #14 |
| Charlene Clarke
<i>PreK-8 VP</i> | Rebecca Challop #6 | Tonja Hills #16 |
| Keith McCall
<i>PreK-8 VP</i> | Kathryn Santoro #6 | Francina Jubilee #16 |
| Josephine Kirkland-Hudson
<i>Pupil Personnel VP</i> | Tashi Campbell-Tulloch #7 | Nadine Shields Alcalde #17 |
| David Watson, Jr.
<i>Security Chapter Leader</i> | Derrick Thompson #7 | Isabel Garcia #17 |
| Melvin Campbell
<i>Teaching Assistant Chapter Leader</i> | Lisa Cavallero #8 | Andre Upson #18 |
| | Nikysha Copeland Bey #8 | David Israel #18 |
| | Francina Mendoza #9 | Eddie Sauls #18 |
| | Alexis Paupaw-Myrie #9 | Jacqueline Simone #18 |

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