

Amityville Teachers' Association Legislative Council

Regular Monthly Meeting

Held Virtually through Zoom

September 14, 2022, 2022 at 4:00pm

Meeting Minutes

ATA CONTRACT 2018-2021

Presiding: Nakia Wolfe

Recording Secretary: Tina Smith

Council Members Present:

		Present	Not Present
Nakia Wolfe	ATA President	x	
Francis O'Brien	ATA VP/NYSUT & AFT	x	
Matt Greiss	ATA VP/Grievances	x	
Tina Smith	ATA Recording Secretary	x	
George Alexander	ATA Treasurer	x	
Maria Lievano	NE BVP	x	
Theresa McCormack	NE ABVP	x	
Nancy Davi-Ortiz	NW BVP	x	
Lydia Robinson	NW ABVP	x	
Paul Grasso	PAMES BVP	x	
Billy Maisel	PAMES ABVP	x	
Stacey Bura	PAMES ABVP	x	
Kelly Ann Wilson	MS BVP	x	
Renee Silon	MS ABVP	x	
Margot Howard	HS BVP	x	
Janine Sarlo	HS ABVP	x	
Sandra Whitney	HS ABVP	x	
Christina Aversano	HS ABVP	x	
Kristina Komsic	LAP	x	

Kathleen Thorn	LAP	x	
Nancy Davi-Ortiz	Suffolk's Edge Chairperson	x	
Beatriz Offitto	NYSUT/AFT delegate	x	
Lydia Robinson	Elections Chairperson	x	
Michael Greco	Health & Safety Chairperson	x	
Hank Carpenter	RTA President		x

Minutes:

This meeting was called to order at: 4:05 pm.

Nakia Wolfe made a motion, 2nd by Nancy.Finizio, to approve the of June 1, 2022.. Without discussion, the minutes were approved **17-0-0**.

Nakia Wolfe made a motion, 2nd by Paul Grasso, to approve the of June 14, 2022. Without discussion, the minutes were approved **12-0-0**.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS:

- 1.Nakia welcomes everyone back!
2. The ATA has had communications with Dr. Lange; and the ATA has expressed our thanks for tote bags and more on Superintendent's Conference Day. The ATA also expressed gratitude for a convocation that afforded staff time to prepare for the opening of the school year.
3. Nakia expressed concern about the scheduling at the H.S. and the M.S. The manner in which the schedule was rolled out for both the H.S. and the M.S. was unacceptable. There was limited and last minute communication regarding scheduling and the understanding of class assignments. The ATA initiated a conversation and had consistent conversations with the administration in order to avoid the many scheduling errors and poor rollout. But, the district did not honor these conversations or the ATA's desire to have early communication about the scheduling concerns.
4. Special Education class sizes: The special education class sizes were not in place before the budget was created. The special education class sizes were maximized to their limit; and the possibility that additional classes might have to be opened up now exists. This is unacceptable practice. Placement should be known by June 1 for all special and regular education classes, along with the content area/grade that teachers will be teaching. Ms.Hutcherson has a plan to discuss scheduling between December and January of 2023. Nakia will speak with Ms. Stephens, H.S. principal, to ask her how she will address scheduling for next year.

5. Shout out to Nicole Rosario. She was awarded tenure. Congrats to Nicole! She will be celebrated, along with other tenured members, in Spring at a B.O.E. meeting.

6. The H.S. did not work towards addressing morale in the building in the beginning of this year.

7. Apple Fest

This is a Park Ave Event: Nakia is searching for Park Ave staff to help with this event from 9-11am on October 1, rain or shine. Members don't need to stay the whole time, but if they can offer some time, it would be appreciated.

8. Nakia asked that the building reps share the names of their election reps with Lydia asap.

9. The ATA is looking into an electronic election process.

10. Hourly employees have a TWO WEEK LAG in processing payment to employees. Please see the hourly employee scale for any work that needs a timesheet.

11. Nakia is advising to keep copies of all of your time sheets.

Treasurer's Report:

1. Thank you for passing the budget.
2. George is reminding BVP's to be aware that any new members in your building should fill out union forms immediately. Those names should be passed on to George.
3. Vote Cope deductions begin on the second payroll.
4. Dues deductions begin on the third payroll.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

We will be seeking five people to be represented on the NEGOTIATIONS TEAM. One person from each building will be interviewed and placed on the team. Then. a building negotiations teams will be created.

BUILDING CONCERNS:

High School:

Past Concerns:

None

New Concerns:

1. All contractual issues have been addressed. Ms. Stephens is very receptive and has been working hard to listen and address concerns.
2. Ms. Stephens will start developing committees for the building.
3. There is great concern about not assigning six classes to teachers to address the need for instruction and student coverage.
4. There is no Special Education Coordinator in the HS. School psychologists are performing the roles of the Special Education Coordinator. **This will be an EC agenda item.**

Middle School:

Past Concerns:

1. Start time of Empire Program:
 - a. The start time for the program will not change, according to Ms. Hutcherson. And, she noted that students will go to extra help until the program begins. **This will be an EC item agenda.**
2. Referral return time
 - a. There is concern that the referral process has a long return time. Ms. Hutcherson will look into a digital referral form.

New Concerns:

1. Detention: Teachers are concerned how it will be assigned.
2. A Math chairperson, a SS chairperson, and a Science chairperson do not exist in the building. Ms. Hutcherson said there is no money for grade level leaders or lead teachers, but **Nakia will check into this statement.** Buildings should have either chairpersons or lead or grade level teachers. Administrators should NOT be holding these positions.
3. The service periods are now aligned to the contract.
4. Ms. Hutcherson will be calling in teachers for excessive absences. **Nakia will bring this item up at the next EC meeting.** He will request a definition of excessive absences.

PAMES

Past Concerns:

None

New Concerns:

1. There are not enough Chrome books for each class. Mr. Plaia's response is to share chrome books. Mr. Quinn is also short on chromebooks. **This will be an EC item agenda.**
2. Class sizes: The third grade ICT class is at 21 with 10 IEP students. Most class sizes in third grade are 16-17 students. This concern was shared with administration at the end of last school year. The ATA has shared concerns regarding class size and lack of classes to accommodate the large numbers of students and needs.
3. There is still no Special Education Coordinator. The school psychologist has been asked to assume some of the roles. Nakia is asking that the school psychologist document all responsibilities that are not within her scope of responsibilities.
4. After school busing concerns: Mr. Plaia mentioned that he would look into having teachers be paid for their time after the 2:30 dismissal time. **This will be an EC item agenda.**

Northwest:

Past Concerns:

The parking lot has been difficult to navigate. This issue remains unresolved. This will be an EC item.

New Concerns:

1. No contractual issues.
2. Nancy shared some positive news:
 - a. Busing and dismissal are going well.
 - b. Lines have been painted in the parking lot.
3. Nancy questioned when pay stubs will be sent to teachers. Nakia reminded us that the pay stubs are available digitally on OPTIGATE.
4. There has been miscommunication regarding the SAVVAS programs as well as which assessment tools are being used. Teachers have been asked to start without materials. There is inconsistency within the district from school to school regarding LLI, assessments, and curriculum. **This will be on the next EC agenda.**
5. There is a shortage in Chromebooks for first grade. **This will be on the next EC agenda.**

Northeast:

Past Concerns:

None

New Concerns:

No contractual issues and no concerns.

Reports:

Vice President/ Grievances report:

1. We currently have two grievances in the works. We are currently in step three of a grievance relating to the involuntary transfer of a teacher. We are awaiting the opportunity to present our case to the school board which must be done by the next board meeting (after September 14th), or the district will be out of compliance with our contractual grievance procedures.
2. The second grievance relates to a teacher being entitled to receive pay while out of work from injuries sustained by an assault from a student. We are in step two of a grievance, awaiting a decision by the superintendent, which must come by September 21st, otherwise we can begin the process to step three.
3. We will be debuting our website soon. All LC members please email a picture that can be used on our website. We would like to have all of our members listed with their pictures, the buildings they are assigned to, and their ATA position.
4. We will be potentially filing a grievance with the district with regard to accrual of sick days. We get **TEN sick days and TWO personal days**. There was a discrepancy regarding when these days are accrued. There has never been a past practice in this district to not accrue your days on day ONE of the school year. **Nakia will place this item on the next EC AGENDA.**

Vice President: NYSUT/AFT

Student Loan Forgiveness:

With the **old Public Service Loan Forgiveness program** (PSLF), the idea was if you worked in public education amongst other career fields you would make payments for ten years for a total of 120 equal payments then have the balance of your loan forgiven. Unfortunately, like many government programs it didn't work. In fact, less than 2% of applicants actually had their loans forgiven. The Biden administration tried to fix this by hiring someone from a University who was an experienced loan officer/financial aid person. He quit in less than six months saying the system was a hopeless mess.

Hopefully, now this temporary revision will make it easier for people. **The only thing I didn't see in the email from Dr. Buatisa was Amityville's EIN**

(Employer Identification number). I emailed her asking her for it earlier tonight.

Regarding the **new student loan forgiveness** that the Biden administration and Department of Education Secretary Cardona announced last week:

1.) The best place for our members to start is at www.studentaid.gov to see if they qualify. Not all student loans qualify and not everyone with a student loan will qualify. It's based on income levels found on your tax returns as well as the type of loan you have. For the income requirement specifically, use your AGI (adjusted gross income) which is found on line 11 of your tax return. (This is step 1)

Those who file as single AGI income must be below \$125,000.

Those filing jointly, married, head of household AGI income must be below \$250,000

Forgiveness amounts range up to \$10,000. The maximum amount would be \$20,000 for those who have Pell Grants. However, if your loan balance is below the maximum the most you would get is your loan balance. For example if you owe \$9,000 then the maximum for you is \$9,000 not \$10,000.

2) Loans that qualify include direct Stafford loans and all direct subsidized and unsubsidized federal student loans. Parent Plus and Grad loans are also eligible. In many cases members may need to call their service loan providers. At this time the FFEL loans do not qualify but the Department of Education is working on a way to fix that but there are no guarantees at this time. Private loans do not qualify for this program. This includes all loans accepted up to July 2022.

3) It is recommended that you gather your records. Like anything else you need to have your paperwork in order to make this process easier. The application hasn't been posted yet. The earliest it could happen would be October. However, Biden has extended the moratorium on student loan payments until the end of 2022. Hence, payments will not begin again until January of 2023. The documents you should have include: your most recent tax return, your loan documents and your current student loan balance.

4) If you are in that small percentage (1.2%) of people who continued to pay your student loans during the moratorium or even paid off your student loans you aren't forgotten. You will be eligible for a refund. Again, this goes up to the maximum levels of \$10,000 or \$20,000 if you have Pell Grants or your loan balance, whichever is less.

For updates on this you can register for bulletins at www.ed.gov

LAP:

1. Breast Cancer Kick Off Friday, October 14 at Carney's.
2. Breast Cancer Walk is Sunday, October 16 from 9-12pm
3. Shirts will be sold by the building LAP reps.

August	<p>New Teacher Luncheon</p> <p>Back to School Bash : Some backpacks are left. Let your building rep know if you know a student in need.</p>
September	<p>Meeting</p>
October	<p>Breast Cancer Kick Off OCT 14 at Carney's</p> <p>Apple Festival OCT. 1</p> <p>Breast Cancer Walk OCT. 16 9-12pm at Amityville Beach</p> <p>Homecoming Festival: OCT 1</p> <p>Homecoming Parade OCT.1 Parade is at noon</p>
November	<p>American Education Week</p> <p>Marc Engler Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser</p> <p>Police/Fire Department- Cookie Platter Thanksgiving</p> <p>Nov. 18: Chris LaMarco fundraiser at Carney's</p>
December	<p>APTC Holiday Sing Along</p>
January	<p>Mid-Winter Blues Happy Hour</p>
February	

March	Kiwanis Spring Social
April	Autism Awareness Kick-Off Autism Fundraiser
May	Autism Walk Tentative Tenure Celebration Teacher Appreciation Week
June	June : Awards Night June : End of Year Party at Captain Bill's in Bayshore, NY

Other discussion:

None

Negotiations:

Nothing to report.

Suffolk's Edge:

1. Suffolk's Edge Teacher Center workroom: The district's poster maker is broken. There is no information regarding the usage of this workroom. Emails to the director have generated an automatic response, so Nakia and Nancy will look into the contact persons for Suffolk's Edge.
2. There is no scheduled date for the next meeting.

Elections:

1. Nothing to report
2. The ATA is looking into a digital voting process and/or a third party election process.

APTC:

Nothing to report

Contributions:

Nakia received an email from the APTC President. She informed us that there is an additional family who lost their home to a fire. They are students of Amityville UFSD. The APTC is collecting donations. The ATA has been invited to donate.

Mentoring Program:

Nothing to report.

Health & Safety:

1. The first meeting is scheduled for October 4.
2. Mike Greco is asking that the building reps send the names of the Health and Safety Building representatives to him as soon as possible.
3. Mike shared about the parking concerns at Northwest School. He explained the options that have been discussed and that there needs to be more conversation and investigation about this issue.

Sick Bank

Renee shared a google form for teachers to complete to join the sick bank. This form is due on OCTOBER 14.

NOTE TO MEMBERS: There is a distinction between the sick bank and donation of sick days. Donations of **sick bank days must be voted on by ATA members.**

An ATA member can request a donation of sick days independently, outside of the sick bank. This request must then be approved by the BOE. **An independent donation of sick days does not have to be voted on by ATA members.**

Bereavement/Condolences:

The process remains the same.

Building reps should share information with Nakia and then Nakia will share with George.

Communication/Website/Social Media/Facebook/Twitter

This year's main project will be to create and maintain a website and social media site. The purpose of this website is to maintain updated communication in real time. This work is in progress.

Matt and Nakia are working on creating a website for the ATA through google sites. The plan is to have this completed by the end of the school year. This will also serve as our social media platform.

The new ATA website will be launched sometime in October.
Matt and Nakia are requesting pictures of events throughout the year.
Suggestions are welcomed!

LC Members: Please send pictures to Matt Greiss or Tina Smith so that your photo can be represented on the website.

Retiree Chapter

Nothing to report

The next Legislative Council Meeting will be Wednesday, October 5, 2022 at 4:00pm. This will be a virtual meeting unless otherwise noted.

The next Executive Council meeting is TBD at 4:00pm in the Park Ave BoardRoom.

The meeting was adjourned at **6:09pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Tina Smith

Recording Secretary
The Amityville Teachers' Association