

## MVFT OVERWHELMING VOTE TO RATIFY 2018-2019 CONTRACT

By Carene Domato, MVFT President

On January 4th, more than 400 MVFT teachers, teaching assistants, and security monitors came together at Mount Vernon High School and overwhelmingly agreed to accept the terms of the 2018-2019 MVFT Memorandum of Agreement.

This contract was a simple rollover of salaries including: a 2% increase in the salary schedule for teaching assistants and security, and for teachers, a 1.25% increase in salary schedule and .25% off-schedule payment. The real victory for the MVFT: no increase in health insurance, no added days to the calendar, no other demands that most contracts include.

We are very fortunate to have nurtured an open and honest relationship with the superintendent and administrative team of our district. Our mutual respect for one another has allowed us to resolve daily issues and make sure your concerns are heard. The MVFT will continue to embrace this relationship moving



MVFT Negotiating Team: L-R: Josephine Kirkland-Hudson, Charlene Clarke, Carene Domato, Monique Bell, Lisa Cavallero, Derrick Thompson, Shondu Young, Jackie Simone, Francina Mendoza, Diana O'Sullivan

forward. We anticipate a similar spirit of collaboration in our next round of negotiations.

Our strength as a union comes from our willingness to stand side by side, stand tall and stand strong together! Congratulations and thank you for your support.

## SAY NO TO UNION BUSTERS

By Carene Domato, MVFT President


Betsy DeVos and her union busting billionaire buddies are back at it. NYSUT has received reports that anti-union door knockers have gone to the homes of teachers in the capital region. They spent the holiday season going door-to-door urging our members to leave their union.




While we know our members are sticking with our union, we also know that the special interests who pledged to spend \$10 million attacking teachers unions will not back down any time soon.

The MVFT is expecting that Westchester will be next on their list and we want to be prepared. We know our union is stronger than ever, which is what drives our opponents crazy.

**So, here's what YOU can do:**

 Go to [nysut.org](http://nysut.org), Janus Action Center, and download your door sign today!

 **If you see something, say something.** Report any union

## STATE TAX DEDUCTION FOR YOUR UNION DUES

**Educator expense tax deduction renewed for 2018 tax returns**

**A reminder for tax season:** Thanks to recent union victories, the educator expense tax deduction has been renewed for 2018 returns - and there's a new state deduction for your union dues, too.

As a result of legislation championed by NYSUT, the state AFL-CIO and unions across the state, which was passed and signed into law in April 2017, union members in New York can **deduct their union dues from their state income taxes** if they itemize. It is important to point out that tax payers can now itemize deductions on their state taxes even if they don't itemize on their federal taxes. Consult with your personal tax preparer to confirm your own situation.

*continued on page 4*

*continued on page 5*



# SPOTLIGHT



The Lincoln School Orchestra, with their director, Mrs. Beth Jennings-Eggar (retired MVCS Music Teacher and Lincoln & Pennington Artist-in-Residence since 2013) attended a production of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" as part of their preparation for holiday concerts in which the Orchestra performed music from the ballet, with players dancing the roles of Sugarplum Fairy and Candy Canes.



Parker school held their quarterly honor roll breakfast. Fifth grade teacher Diana O'Sullivan and guidance counselor Nikia Jones, along with the Parker school PTA welcomed students and parents for a hot breakfast and awards ceremony.



On January 15th, Jenny Vaccaro, Margaret Beardsley, Janet Rush, and Ellen Saligumba visited the new Makerspace and Global Learning Centers in several schools in Chappaqua. This group is part of the BOCES Collegial Circle for Visual Arts Educators which works to keeping the "A" in STEAM. They had the chance to see models and talk with Chappaqua teachers about the logistics of having a Makerspace in their schools.



Pre-K students at Parker explored the word goopy. They mixed shampoo, shaving cream and glitter glue. They ended up with a goopy texture and children enjoyed putting their hands inside it. They said it smelled good and felt nice and fluffy. The children took some of the goopy home with them.



## THE MVFT CELEBRATED PARENT INVOLVEMENT DAY 2019

Schools welcomed parents/guardians, families, community members, and staff to honor and highlight their contributions to support student success. Parents enjoyed student performances, workshops, class visits and many other planned activities. A special thank you is extended to the MVFT PID Committee (Josephine Kirkland-Hudson, Christine Ceglio-Iaffaldano, Charlene Clarke, and Karen Wheeler) for all their efforts. The MVFT donated over 1,500 personalized pens to help support this powerful initiative!

## WEARING RED TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

### VICTORY FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS IN LOS ANGELES

*AFT Elizabeth Sell*

After two years of negotiations and six days on the picket lines, the United Teachers Los Angeles reached a tentative contract agreement with the LA School District. The details were worked out over an all-night bargaining session that lasted until sunrise.



"The agreement is a paradigm shift for the city and nation, as it makes a clear commitment to the resources and conditions necessary for teachers to teach and kids to learn in L.A.'s public schools," AFT President Randi Weingarten says. "This strike and the community support of the teacher strikers flipped debate over public education in L.A. on its head. And the result is nothing short of a sea of change for public schools and for educators in L.A. and in the country."

The strike proved that the public stands behind public school teachers. Parents, students, clergy, and the entire union community came together to support the Los Angeles educators. Tens of thousands of people, including members of the MVFT, signed petitions, spoke out on social media, and wore red to show their support.

The agreement delivered on a much-deserved pay raise, a full time nurse in every school everyday, caps on class size, reduction in student testing, teacher librarians in every school, capping of charters, capping of special education case loads. "For too long, teachers have lived with a hard truth to tell—that for years students were being starved of the resources they need," says UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl. "Our expectations were raised by this strike. Together we said we deserve better, our students deserve better. We must keep our expectations high and not let go of this moment, because the next struggle is right around the corner."

## WELFARE FUND NEWS...

Please be advised that effective January 1, 2019, The Trustees of the MVFT Welfare Fund have voted to eliminate the restriction of allowing for two implants per each jaw per lifetime. The implant benefit will now allow up to four implants per lifetime regardless of the placement. A pre-treatment review claim should be submitted for any treatment anticipated to cost more than \$500 and/or include any of the following services: inlays, crowns, bridges, dentures, laminate veneers, or periodontal surgery.

Although most services are covered if you are using a participating provider, there are exclusions and co-pays for certain procedures. However, as our dental schedule is updated frequently, your provider may not always be aware of all covered benefits. If you have been advised of out of pocket charges when utilizing a plan provider, you should confirm the accuracy of the charges with Administrative Services Only, Inc. (516) 396-5500.

Also, please be reminded that **ANY changes to your address and/or dependent status** such as marriage, birth, divorce or death must be reported to the MVFT office. The MVFT Welfare Fund is independent of the school district and information given to the District is not shared with the MVFT.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Carene Domato  
*President*
- Jeanne Casino  
*Vice President, Grievance Chair*
- Angelique Perez  
*Treasurer*
- Anita Amieiro  
*Secretary*
- Karl Nifontoff  
*High School VP*
- Richard Suozzo  
*High School VP*
- Christine Ceglio-Iaffaldano  
*PreK-8 VP*
- Patricia Duggan  
*PreK-8 VP*
- Charlene Clarke  
*PreK-8 VP*
- Keith McCall  
*PreK-8 VP*
- Josephine Kirkland-Hudson  
*Pupil Personnel VP*
- David Watson, Jr.  
*Security Chapter Leader*
- Melvin Campbell  
*Teaching Assistant Chapter Leader*

## BUILDING REPS

- Jhanice McDonald #1
- Jessica Pizzuti #1
- Toba Duggan #2
- Modesta Curzio-Spies #2
- Diana O'Sullivan #4
- Shawn Harper-Tarrant #4
- Thalia Langley #5
- Marcia Wint #5
- Rebecca Challop #6
- Kathryn Santoro #6
- Tashi Campbell-Tulloch #7
- Derrick Thompson #7
- Lisa Cavallero #8
- Nikysha Copeland Bey #8
- Francina Mendoza #9
- Alexis Paupaw-Myrie #9
- TBD #10
- Deborah Thompson #10
- Monique Bell #12
- Annette Coppola #12
- TBD #13
- Aret Ishan #13
- Nicole White Lee #14
- Charissa Ayala #14
- Tonja Hills #16
- Francina Jubilee #16
- Nadine Shields Alcalde #17
- Isabel Garcia #17
- Andre Upson #18
- David Israel #18
- Eddie Sauls #18
- Jacqueline Simone #18

## UNION OFFICE

MVFT Rm. 303  
22 West First St.  
Mount Vernon, NY 10550  
Phone: (914) 664-3189  
Fax: (914) 664-0860  
Online at: [www.mvft.org](http://www.mvft.org)

## The Agenda

Lisa Cavallero, *Editor*  
Carene Domato, *Staff*  
Karen Molinaro, *Staff*



## HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS ABOUT APPR?

By Jeanne Casino, MVFT Vice President

The new APPR bill was introduced and passed in both houses in Albany and is waiting to be signed by Governor Cuomo. No changes to our APPR document can be made until the bill is signed and we negotiate with the district. Our 2018-2019 APPR was finalized in February and should be on Ed Vistas soon. In the document for 2018-2019 there were very few changes. The targets remained, for the most part, unchanged. The target for the Science 4 increased by 1 point to 71, while the Physics target decreased by 3 points to 60. There were changes to some NYSES LAT targets as well. Also, the district applied for, and was granted, another waiver for the independent evaluator part of the observations. This waiver allows for your building administration to conduct the independent observations. It was very difficult to schedule those outside independent observations. This waiver helps to alleviate that difficulty. The observation part of the APPR has not changed.

The new APPR bill eliminates the state growth model from the law. The growth score will no longer be calculated by the state. This bill also eliminates the **requirement** to use state tests in APPR. This change includes the NYS ELA and Math assessments, Regents, NYSES LAT and the Alternate Assessment for students with disabilities. The student performance part of our evaluations will be subject to bargaining; your APPR committee will negotiate with the district and any changes to student performance will be calculated. Our APPR currently uses group measures for most teachers: Grade 4 Science, Living Environment, and the High School ELA Regents. The matrix (HE,E,D, and I) will still be used as it produced the lowest number of ineffective ratings since the original law was adopted.

Although this does not cure all of our APPR problems, it is a step in the right direction. Please contact anyone on the APPR committee with any questions or concerns. The members are Jeanne Casino, Anita Amieiro (MVHS), Lisa Cavallero (Grimes), Keith McCall (Williams), and Karl Nifontoff (Thornton/STEAM).

## STATE TAX DEDUCTION FOR YOUR UNION DUES

continued from page 1

**ALSO**, eligible educators can deduct up to \$250 of qualified expenses paid in 2018.

If you and your spouse are filing jointly and both of you were eligible educators, the maximum deduction is \$500. However, neither spouse can deduct more than \$250 of his or her qualified expenses.

An eligible educator is a K-12 teacher, instructor, counselor, principal, or aide who worked at least 900 hours in a school that provides elementary or secondary education as determined by state law.

Qualified expenses include ordinary and necessary expenses paid:

- In connection with books, supplies, equipment (including computer equipment, software, and services), and other materials used in the classroom.
- For professional development courses you have taken related to the curriculum you teach or to the students you teach.

An ordinary expense is one that is common and accepted in your educational field. A necessary expense is one that is helpful and appropriate for your profession as an educator. An expense doesn't have to be required to be considered necessary.

These deductions will put an estimated \$35 million back into the pockets of union members like you throughout our state.

## BEAT THE WINTER BLUES AND THE BE A HAPPY TEACHER CHALLENGE

By Jeanne Casino, MVFT Vice President

Any time the news mentions a chance of snow, many of us (students and administrators as well) are glued to the TV and hopeful for that phone call. SNOW DAY!!!! Some of us are feeling the winter blues at this time of year. We passed the halfway mark. It must be something about winter; be it the cold, the snow, or it becoming darker earlier that makes us want to stay in bed and be grumpy.

While perusing Twitter one night I came across "The 30 Day Happy Teacher Challenge" from Prestoplans. The link can be found at [TeachersPayTeachers.com](http://TeachersPayTeachers.com) and searching for the Free 30 Day Happy Teacher Challenge. It's a 30 day calendar with easy-to-do activities which might make all of us a little happier and also eager to go to school every day. Some of the challenges include playing relaxing music while working, exercising, giving students a high five in the morning, writing a funny joke on the board, and my favorite, not doing work during lunch (without the guilt). Try it! You might like it!



## RETIREE NEWS ~

### HOLIDAY INITIATIVE DONATIONS

Our MVFT Retirees continue to support our students and the MVFT. Many retirees gave generously for gift cards, scarves, and Ronald McDonald House. Cesar Matanzo deposited the funds into the credit union MVFT Retiree Chapter account.

### RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

By Karen Wallace, Chairperson

MVFT Retirees have been cooking dinner once a month for the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Valhalla since July of 2017. This past December, we asked for donations to continue this project and received \$1,075 from retirees. That is enough money to keep us going until January 2020. THANK YOU!

At present we have twenty-six retirees signed up to cook. We rotate volunteers as much as possible. If you would like to sign up for the committee, please send an email to [kkwallace312@gmail.com](mailto:kkwallace312@gmail.com). It is rewarding—and fun!

### HOLIDAY SCARF PROJECT

By Maz Hogan, Chairperson

The MVFT Retirees have completed another amazing feat of providing scarves for the MVFT Holiday Initiative. Last year, we distributed over 200 scarves to the elementary school students. This year we were faced with the task of collecting 469 scarves for pre-kindergarten to sixth grade students. We did it! Retirees and friends knitted, crocheted, cut fleece and purchased scarves to help us out. Some scarves came from as far away as Georgia. Monetary donations were also made by retirees. The scarves were distributed by the MVFT Building Representatives before the holiday break.

### RETIREE CHAPTER MEETING - APRIL

The spring meeting of the MVFT Retiree Chapter will be held at the MVFT office in April. Date TBD. Information regarding the meeting agenda and date will be emailed and posted on the MVFT.org website.



L-R: Elyse Hintzon, Karen Wallace, Barbara Foley, Vera Glazewski



L-R: Roberta Greco, Dianne Santino, Denise Medof



Maz Hogan, Chairperson "Scarves for Kids"

## THE 30 DAY HAPPY TEACHER CHALLENGE


Bring a bit of positivity to your day by completing the following daily challenges to make you a happier teacher.

1 Pull a student aside to tell them how much they have improved or how proud you are of them.	2 Organize an area in your classroom that has become a bit chaotic (shelves, book case, your desk etc.)	3 Strike up a conversation with a colleague that you don't speak to very much.	4 Write a funny joke on your board for students to read when they enter your classroom.	5 Take a short walk during your lunch, prep period, or after school. During the walk, think about the things in your life that make you the happiest.
6 Calm the paper chaos. Organize your papers or student work by filing them, throwing them away, or putting them in an orderly fashion.	7 Think of a student who is talented and always works well, but they might not stand out as a top student. Call that student's parent/guardian with some praise.	8 Compliment another teacher on something they have done well for their students or the school. Appreciation goes a long way.	9 Find an inspirational quote online that you relate to in some way, write it on a post-it, and put it somewhere on your desk.	10 Don't do ANY work during lunch today and don't feel guilty about it.
11 At the start of class, ask out loud cards and ask students to respond to this prompt: "I am happiest when..."	12 Download this free task planner, laminate it, and attach it to your desk! <a href="http://bit.ly/desktplanner">bit.ly/desktplanner</a>	13 Write a thank-you note to the custodian who cleans your classroom to tell him or her that you appreciate their work. It is usually a thankless job.	14 Make a conscious effort to thank today, especially at those students who aren't having a great day. Smile and try to be contagious.	15 Use the last few minutes of class to take a photo of your students as a group. Print the picture and post it in your classroom.
16 Give a compliment to a student who often seems to be in trouble. Say it somewhere where other students might overhear.	17 Clean up a small area in your class that has been getting a bit disorganized.	18 Play some relaxing music while your students are working today.	19 Start the day off by thinking of three things you are doing really well as a teacher. Say those things out loud to yourself!	20 Make time for exercise today. It can be a walk after work, a trip to the gym, or you could even try a short exercise video on YouTube!
21 Write a note to a student who has done something kind or thoughtful to show them that their good deed is noticed.	22 Organize the files on your computer. Make and title file folders (Right Click + New folder) and put the documents in them!	23 Share a successful lesson plan with a colleague who teaches the same subject or grade level as you. Encourage them to try it out!	24 Think of a student who doesn't always get recognized. Display that student's work in your classroom somewhere (with their permission).	25 Drinking water helps energize you, keep your kidneys healthy, and keeps you looking great. Fill a water bottle every morning and attempt to drink it all water in the day.
26 Think about the top 5 things you love about teaching. Write them down and have them somewhere as a reminder when teaching gets stressful!	27 Do something nice for a colleague. Bring them a coffee, put a little treat in their mailbox, or do something else thoughtful.	28 Are you having an issue in your classroom? Don't try to deal with it on your own. Talk to a colleague that you respect to ask their advice on how to deal.	29 Try using an exit pass at the end of a lesson to see what your students have learned! Download this free exit pass. <a href="http://bit.ly/exitpass">bit.ly/exitpass</a>	30 Great students do the deed and give them high fives as they enter if they are in high school, they will tell their eyes, but they'll secretly think you're awesome.

## SAY NO TO UNION BUSTERS

continued from page 1

busters who knock on your door to your building rep and NYSUT's Member Relations Teams at [unionbusters@nysutmail.org](mailto:unionbusters@nysutmail.org).

 Join the NYSUT Member Organizing Institute. You can earn extra money while helping fend off attacks on our union. Training begins in March. Contact Carene Domato if interested.

This is the campaign that never ends, but it is one that is making us stronger every day. *NYSUT and the MVFT is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as we fight to defend our voice, our values, our union.*



## CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

By Anita Amieiro, MVFT Secretary

### GET WELL WISHES

Donna Bailey (Grimes)  
Susan Stanton (Pennington)  
Nakia Hiland (Pennington)

Get Well  
soon!



### WELCOME BACK

Ariella Knoll (Parker)

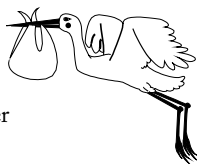
### WEDDING BELLS

Kathy Nieves (Parker)  
Cassie Carpenter (Thornton/PVAM)



### BIRTHS

Colleen Cioffi (Parker) Daughter  
Nicole Chappas (Graham) Daughter  
Suleyma Salazar-Rivas (Hamilton) Son  
Melissa White-Harris (Holmes) Son  
Ona McFarlane Lowe (Holmes) Daughter  
Jeff Knott (RTES) Daughter  
Maria Laurino (Retiree) Great-Nephew  
Jackie Biaggi (Retiree) Granddaughter  
Carene Domato (MVFT Pres) Grandson  
Guy Gerace and Rhea DeBlasio (Retirees) Grandson



### CONGRATULATIONS

Stefanie Principio (STEAM)  
Tobias Mag (STEAM) Engagement  
Dana Rasamny (PVAM) Engagement  
Andrew Campbell (Grimes) Bachelor's in Science  
Brienne Reason (Holmes) Engagement  
Sarah Buckley (Holmes) Engagement  
Jessica Baruffo (Williams) Engagement  
Ainy Betancourt (RTES) Engagement  
Maria Laurino (Retiree) Retirement  
Jackie Biaggi (Retiree) Engagement of Son



### CONDOLENCES

Toba Duggan (Lincoln) Father-in-Law  
Teresa Cowans (BTMS) Mother  
Wanda Callaway (Pennington) Niece  
Lisa Duggan (Retiree) Father  
Janiyah Rice (Grimes) Father-in-Law  
Avery Anderson (Graham) Grandmother  
Robin Johnson (RTMS) Son  
Carolyn Bartee (STEAM) Sister  
Lylia Anderson (Pennington/Williams) Grandmother  
Erica Dunkley (Parker) Mother  
Jean Cesar (Graham) Mother  
Kaitlyn Hanson (Holmes) Father  
The Family of Lawrence Kintz (Retiree)

## WHY POSITIVE BEHAVIORS INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)?

### TIERS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Taken directly from PBIS Rewards, Revised by Josephine Kirkland-Hudson

PBIS is currently implemented in Mount Vernon City School District's elementary schools. It uses a three-tier approach. Each of these three tiers has applications to a specific subset of students. "The goal of PBIS is to create a positive school climate, in which students learn and grow. Implementing the PBIS framework can make the task more manageable. The key to an effective PBIS implementation is an 'all-in' mentality among teachers and administrators in a school."



#### Tier 1 – Most Students (Universal or Primary Prevention)

The bulk of PBIS supports fall within Tier 1. Schools begin at Tier 1 by creating a behavior matrix outlining the positive behaviors that they wish to establish school-wide. As the school staff and students focus on these behavioral goals, negative behaviors begin to lessen. Teachers begin spending less time in disciplining students, instructional time increases.

#### Tier 2 – Some Students (Secondary Prevention)

For the subset of students who struggle with Tier 1 interventions and supports, Tier 2 addresses at-risk behavior. The specialized interventions and supports at the Tier 2 level help to prevent the worsening of problem behaviors. These interventions include mentoring, check-in/check-out and social/academic groups to provide support in changing those behaviors.

#### Tier 3 – Few Students (Tertiary Prevention)

Students who do not respond to the interventions and supports in Tier 2 receive further individualized supports in Tier 3. **These interventions target students who exhibit high-risk behaviors.** An individualized plan for each student at this level may include efforts by teachers and support staff.

Please visit [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) for more resources. You can also reach out to the MVCS D PBIS liaisons for questions: Jamal Doggett, [jdoggett@mtvernoncsd.org](mailto:jdoggett@mtvernoncsd.org); Josephine Kirkland-Hudson, [jkirkland@mtvernoncsd.org](mailto:jkirkland@mtvernoncsd.org) or Melissa Giannelli-Sansotta, [mgiannelli@mtvernoncsd.org](mailto:mgiannelli@mtvernoncsd.org).

## NEW PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT FREE GLASSES!

Please be advised that Raymond Opticians is no longer accepting the old student eyeglass forms.

### The new procedure will be as follows:

- Nurse/Teacher recommends necessity for student's glasses
- Nurse verifies family insurance status
- Nurse/MVFT member emails student's name to MVFT at: [kmolinaro@mtvernoncsd.org](mailto:kmolinaro@mtvernoncsd.org)
- A numbered form will be scanned back to the requestor to be given to the student



### MEMBERSHIP

Active	1131
Leave	20
Retired	572