

Happenings

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Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT #2937, AFL-CIO

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PJTA Election Edition

Officers

President:

Regis Foster

1st Vice President:

Jenny McElroy

2nd Vice President:

Barbara Cathy

Recording Secretary:

Debra Cassara

**Corresponding/
Social Secretary:**

Claire Dillon

Treasurer:

Todd Hill

**Grievance Chair-
man:**

Robert Avdoyan

All PJTA members will have the opportunity to cast their vote for representatives in the PJTA. Each candidate was asked to submit their "speech" for publication in *Happenings*.

Candidates for President of PJTA :

Regis Foster (incumbent), Tanya Duryea (challenger)

Regis Foster

Dear Colleagues:

It is an honor and privilege that I once again am able to accept the nomination for PJTA President. I am truly grateful for the support from our members and the PJTA Executive Board throughout the past two years. Together, we have been able to accomplish many goals.

During my tenure as PJTA President, I have been able to keep each and every promise that I made. When the district threatened to lay off 10-15 of our members, I fought hard to ensure that there would be NO layoffs. While working closely with the Negotiations' team, I was able to facilitate for a reasonable contract and spent countless hours negotiating for a fair APPR agreement which included a two-year safe harmless clause. Next year, PJTA will be heading back to the negotiating table to negotiate a new APPR agreement. From being evaluated by the new APPR process this year, there are changes that I would like to see negotiated to benefit all of those who are evaluated by this process in the new agreement.

Additionally, I worked to strengthen communications by listening to the concerns of our members as I often visited each school building and attended union-update meetings. Likewise, we have been able to quickly and accurately disseminate information to all of our members through the creation of a new union website.

Regis Foster, continued:

Representing each voice and making sure all members were treated fairly, was a top priority of mine and will remain as such. When members were not being treated fairly by the district in violating members' rights, a grievance was immediately filed and due process occurred. Together, we have been able to successfully stand our ground and keep what our past members have fought so hard for.

I am seeking your support to continue to serve as your PJTA President. With your help, I will be able to continue to vigorously represent the PJTA members!

In solidarity,

Regis Foster

Tanya Duryea

Dear PJTA Members,

Hello, my name is Tanya Duryea and I am seeking your support. While many of you may already know me from my work with you in each of our district's buildings, I will use this letter to further introduce myself, and to describe reasons for my candidacy as P.J.T.A. President.

After nine years of teaching in the elementary and middle school at Minisink Valley, I began my career in Port Jervis in 2006 as a special education teacher at the Port Jervis High School. In 2009, I was asked to take on the responsibilities of C.S.E/C.P.S.E Chair, and have continued to serve faithfully and professionally in that role. What I have learned in fulfilling these responsibilities has, in part, been the catalyst for me to seek to strengthen our union.

My work in each of our schools has afforded me the opportunity to observe first-hand the terrific job we P.J.T.A. members do day in and day out on the front lines of education. My travels to other school districts has caused me to appreciate, even more, the outstanding work we do here in Port-Jervis with some of the county's neediest children. Further, my regular communications with the S.E.D. has given me insight concerning just how much more challenging teaching and teacher evaluation is going to become while, at the same time, resources are cut back.

As I complete my fifteenth year of teaching, I believe my varied professional experiences make me especially prepared to appreciate the concerns of ALL our district's teachers. These experiences include being tenured three times and serving as: a classroom teacher at the elementary level, a special education classroom and inclusion teacher at the middle and high school levels, a workshop leader for National Science Foundation presentations and a facilitator for special needs placements as C.S.E. Chairperson.

Tanya Duryea, continued:

Difficult times lie ahead for every district. Being a mother of two girls who will graduate from Port, I am personally invested in our district maintaining high quality instructional programs. During these uncertain times, we need union leadership that works with but is not beholden to administration. We need leadership that is intelligent, resourceful and creative. We need leadership that appreciates and understands a classroom teacher's issues. Most of all, we need a leader who is passionate in fighting for members' rights and the programs our children need and deserve.

I am confident that I will bring these qualities to the position of Union President and, therefore, respectfully ask for your vote.

In solidarity,

Tanya Duryea

Candidates for Grievance Chairperson of PJTA :
Robert Avdoyan (incumbent), Jody Case-Kennedy (challenger)

Robert Avdoyan

Dear Colleagues,

I have been nominated for the PJTA executive position of Grievance Chair. It is with much appreciation that I accept the nomination. I am a special education teacher and I have served the Port Jervis School District for 32 years. I have held the position of Grievance Chair on the executive council for the past three years. My main responsibility is to protect the terms and conditions of the Agreement between PJTA and the District. During my tenure as your Grievance Chair, I have filed over ten grievances, Improper Practices and Notices of Claim to protect PJTA and our members against violations of the Agreement. I stand by my record as each action had a successful outcome. I was also on the negotiating team to help secure a four year agreement for our members. This labor agreement has brought stability to PJTA and the District.

I seek your support for reelection as your Grievance Chair so that I may continue to serve PJTA and all its members.

Yours in solidarity,

Robert Avdoyan

Jody Case-Kennedy

PJTA Members,

I would like your vote for the PJTA Grievance Chairperson.

My name is Jody Case-Kennedy and I have worked for the Port Jervis School District for 31 years. I started my career as an elementary classroom teacher where I taught for 17 years. I taught the Gifted and Talented Program for 12 years splitting my time between A.S.K. and H.B.E. The last two years I have been an A.S.K. 6th grade A.I.S. teacher. I have had the opportunity to work with many talented co-workers. Early in my career I was a Building Representative and I have always kept current on the issues.

I spent my early learning career in the Port Jervis Schools and graduated from the Port Jervis High School. I went to college and returned to the area. Now, my home is in Montague. However, I do own and pay taxes on property in the Port Jervis School District. I vote and believe everyone's voice is important.

I attend school board meetings in both Port Jervis and Montague. I am on the Land Use Board and the Recreation Committee for Montague Township. Also, I am on the Board of Trustees in the community that I reside. These experiences have given me the opportunity to communicate and plan with a variety of personalities.

I see the Grievance Chairperson as an opportunity to once again get positively involved in the PJTA. I have a genuine concern for the issues that face PJTA members' and will be an advocate for all members. I believe in being a "team" player.

Lorelei Case is my sister. In her position she deals with the CSEA Grievances. The fact that she is in this position will not present a conflict regarding my potential position as the PJTA Grievance Chairperson.

There are great changes in the education programs and we all need to be a part of this. At times we all feel like novices. I have had a great opportunity in the last two years to become familiar with the APPR and the Common Core Standards. All of us are feeling the stress and need to be a part of a "team" that wants a win-win outcome in the Grievance Process.

I believe that we need leadership with integrity. If anyone has a question please contact me. If elected, I will be available for questions and concerns you may have about the Grievance Process. I am looking forward to working with my fellow PJTA members.

Once again, I would like your vote for the PJTA Grievance Chairperson.

Respectfully,
Jody Case-Kennedy

Candidates for Recording Secretary of PJTA :
Debra Cassara (incumbent), Jody Hanlon (challenger),
Lynda Valentin (challenger), Heather Tufano (challenger)

Debra Cassara

Dear PJTA Members:

I am seeking the position of Recording Secretary in the PJTA officers' elections and would greatly appreciate your support. I have significant experience in this position and during my time in office have attended nearly all meetings, served on numerous committees and maintained meticulous records. In addition, I have served the members of the association by serving as a negotiator since 1982 and as the secretary-treasurer of the Benefit Fund since its inception in 1989. I believe that the association is extremely important for all members and I have always represented you in a fair and equitable manner. I would like the opportunity to continue to serve and your vote will allow me to do so!

Thank you for your support!

Deb Cassara

B. Jody Hanlon

I have had the pleasure to be a PJTA member and a school psychologist in the PJCS D since 2000. I sincerely believe that the great conditions under which we work are in large part due to the hard work and sacrifice of our union leaders and members, both past and present. With such great working conditions we are able to provide our students with the best opportunity to succeed. It is my desire to become our next recording secretary and work towards maintaining our opportunities to improve our work environment and to help our students.

My union experiences have been diverse. As the son of a lifetime member of the Communication Workers of America, I learned early about the need for solidarity in order to maintain a reasonable place to work. While attending my own local meetings for the Life Insurance Sales-Workers of America and then for the Delaware Academy Faculty Association, I grew to appreciate the opportunity to learn from our veteran members. After receiving tenure in our district, I was afforded the opportunity to become a building level representative. These experiences allowed me to observe the formal functioning of our union officers as well as to learn from our more senior colleagues about the rationale behind many of the rights and privileges that our member's had gained for us.

B. Jody Hanlon, continued:

Due to family obligations that many of us will face in our careers, I needed to step away from the position of building level representative. While being blessed with the opportunity to watch my children and their peers grow as I coached them in football, soccer, basketball, baseball and lacrosse, I was also an active booster club member. These experiences permitted me to see and experience the formal functioning of these executive committees during monthly meetings that were similar to our own union meetings. And now that my children have grown out of their youth sports, I find that I want to return to our union in order to serve and strengthen.

I believe my practice as a psychologist has also enabled me to observe the work that occurs in many of our classrooms and therapy offices throughout our district. I find that this provides me with a unique perspective in understanding the different challenges that our members face. I will remember these challenges in my position as recording secretary so that the value that we add to the students opportunities to succeed are evenly appreciated and representative. Thank your for taking the time to consider me for this position. I want to wish all of the candidates well during this campaign and I look forward to continuing our work towards the continued strength of our association and the opportunity to help our students succeed.

Heather Tufano

My name is Heather Tufano, I graduated from Port Jervis High School in 1992, and have been a general education teacher at Anna S. Kuhl Elementary for the past fifteen years. I am running for the recording secretary position for the upcoming school year. I shall record the minutes of all meetings, maintain the non financial files and records of the union, and also perform other duties as delegated by the president. Thank you for any support!

Lynda Valentin

Hello, my name is Lynda Valentine. I have worked for the Port Jervis School District since 2001. I began my career as a 6th grade teacher then moved onto 3rd grade and spent a year teaching kindergarten. This current school year, I am back to teaching 3rd grade! I am a building representative for HBE and actively attend union meetings. I believe that I would make an excellent addition to our executive board as Recording Secretary. I am ready to take an even more active role in our union. Thank you for your time!

Lynda Valentine

Candidates for Alternative NYSUT Delegates

Barbara Cathy, Michelle Kennedy

Uncontested Offices in the PJTA

First Vice-President—Jenny McElroy

Second Vice-President—Barbara Cathy

Corresponding/Social Secretary—Claire Dillon

Treasurer—Joseph Becker

NYSUT Delegates—Craig Fisher & Eric Hartmann



Election for all PJTA Officers will take place May 15, 16, and 17, 2013.
The sealed ballots will be brought to the May 20, 2013 PJTA Representative Meeting.
All ballots will be opened and tallied at this meeting.