

Laurie Colacchio

Candidate for NTA Secretary - Professional Statement

My name is Laurie Colacchio and I am running for NTA Secretary. I began my teaching career in the NECSD in 1993 at Gardnertown School teaching in a self-contained class. I taught out of district in 94 -95, and in September of 1995 I returned as an employee of the NECSD teaching throughout the district in self-contained classes, resource rooms, as a consult teacher, and as an inclusion teacher in co-taught/integrated classrooms. I have taught at the elementary, junior, middle, and now high school level. I have been an active member of the NTA since 1999 as an alternate, delegate, and head delegate.

- 2003 – 2004 as head delegate at MH; I was instrumental in having a principal removed from the building by uniting the majority of teachers and together standing up to the abuses of her authority. The support from past NTA President, Jeff Benton; Executive Counsel, Frank Colone; Grievance Chair, Flip Gertler; and Steve DeMarco was imperative. Without strong union support and the uniting of the teachers, this would not have occurred.
- 2004 – 2005 as head delegate at MH I played a critical role in securing a \$2,300,000 Reading First Grant for MHS, with support from a majority of teachers who voted for this initiative.
 - President Phil Cordella and I authored a pro-teacher, pro-child Supplemental Memorandum of Agreement in a three year plan outlining teacher responsibilities that was fair and equitable to all.
 - **The first sentence of the SMOA read:** 1. Unit members participating under this grant initiative shall not be subject to critical evaluation or discipline based upon student outcomes that are obtained each school year.
- 2005 – 2006 I was the NYS Mentor Intern Program coordinator, working collaboratively with John Eitel, the Newburgh Teacher Center coordinator, on program development, as well as, logistical components of the program. These included: serving as intermediary between the building principal and the NTC coordinator, pairing trained mentors with intern teachers, recommending a seasoned and respected replacement teacher for trained mentors, coordinating mentor/intern schedules, submitting bi-weekly time sheets to payroll, keeping track of hours mentor and interns met, and providing pertinent information for mid and end-of-year reports to NYS.
- NTC Policy Board Member 2005 - 2006
- Teacher Mentor 2005 - 2008
- Key presenter at the 2007 NTA-BOE forum where I was influential in changing the amount of benchmark testing students received.
- National Board Certification Candidate 2007 - 2009
- 2007 – 2008 Winner of the William G. Reilly Profile in Unionism Award; this goes to educational professionals who have been recognized by their colleagues as making a difference.
- 2008 – 2009 Performance Condition Committee member

Our district is facing many challenges and our work day has become more daunting and challenging with NCLB, Race to the Top, the newly adopted Common Core Standards, the Danielson Rubric being phased in and implemented in two years, as well as, the School Improvement Grant (SIG) which is tied into the APPR's evaluation system of Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective.

Class sizes are teetering around 30 students in our most vulnerable grades, as well as, other grades. The reduction of teaching assistants and teachers through lay-offs and attrition, all while central administration increased their salaries.

Changes in a union come when we work collaboratively together, free from unilateral decisions that affect each of us. A union should protect its members with Duty of Fair Representation, and to inform its members with truths.

Transparency is of the utmost importance, as decisions that are made today will have great impact on us as professionals in the future.