

Patricia M. Van Duser

Professional Statement

I believe teachers and teaching assistants are the people who should guide training and programs that effect classroom instruction. Change should be done with us--not to us! I have tried to be a voice for *our* needs at the bargaining table and in Albany. I don't just speak out; but create solutions to the problems we face. I have worked diligently to increase communication with our members and create a state-of-the-art training facility here at the NTA. The team I have gathered as my running mates are teachers with a variety of experience to assist the NTA in the challenges that lie ahead. Each person brings their expertise to our collective group. I am excited about the potential, the energy, and expertise we bring to serve you. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and our profession.

As NTA President for the past three years, here are some recent accomplishments made on your behalf:

➤ Negotiations

- The NTA contract was ratified by a 96% vote. When the NTA negotiating team surveyed our members—our members told us save jobs. **By taking a freeze for 4 months the NTA was able to return 10 teachers to their positions. In addition, the NTA was able to return to work 26 teachers who had more than one certification; with no loss of steps or salary.** That is true negotiations. This does not happen anywhere else in Orange County!
- Negotiated half days in June for the Elementary Schools.
- Coordinated the procedure for teachers with professional certificates to log professional development hours on the TEACH website.
- Collaborated on the MOA where sixth grade teachers moved to the middle schools and received professional development for the new program.
- **Negotiated last year's 50% Retirement Incentive.** Largest in NTA history (over 50 teachers took advantage of this—creating fewer layoffs).

➤ Improved Communications

- The Pendulum published in house every six weeks and sent to all members. Through upgrading our technology, we are able to produce color copies of The Pendulum in our office while saving over \$1,000 per issue!
- Revived the NTA Notebook with a new focus on political issues and member benefits. It is sent to all active members.
- Initiated two Facebook pages with almost 600 “friends.”
- NTA website is updated regularly with training seminars, NTA happenings and the latest news.
- Provided each delegate, alternate and committee member the opportunity to have their own NTA mailbox. This has saved money on mailings and has helped timely communication.

- NTA Building Improvements
 - Updated wiring in our building and we now have a state-of-the-art computer training facility upstairs.
 - Upgraded lighting system through Central Hudson's Energy Efficient Lighting System Program. Central Hudson paid 70% of the cost of the upgrade; the remaining 30% paid for itself in energy savings over the next twelve months.
 - Changed oil suppliers for a savings.
 - The septic system was replaced and the building is now operating on city sewer.
 - New cleaning service hired in 2008 also produced a savings.
- Political Action
 - Increased lobbying efforts in Albany and locally.
 - Published the NTA Notebook monthly and provided updates on our Facebook page.
 - Appointed committee of members who attend BOE monthly meetings and record how our BOE members vote (whether or not they are supportive).
 - Increased VOTE/COPE contributions each year. In 2008, the NTA collected \$28.39 per member; in 2009, \$32.27 per member; and in 2010, \$40.94 per member.
 - Initiated a Voter Registration Drive this fall and raised awareness of the power of one vote.
- Benefit Trust Fund
 - BTF prescription reimbursement increased to \$300 for active family members.
 - Increased benefits for braces and many other dental procedures.
- Educational Issues
 - Revitalized the Newburgh Teacher Center after it was dissolved in June 2010. Appointed a new policy board and reapplied to the State for funding to ensure meaningful staff development for our teachers and teaching assistants.
 - Provided NYSUT ELT course at the NTA building.
 - Attended New York Middle Level Training on the APPR.
 - Actively involved in Learning Focused Relationships training.
 - Attended NYSTRS Convention.
 - Provided NYSTRS Forums here at the NTA.
 - Participated in Celebration of Teaching and Learning Convention.
 - Attend NYSUT ED 13/14 meetings.
 - Participate in OCTA meetings.

Currently I hold the positions of:

- NTA President.
- Chairperson of the BTF.
- NYSUT Delegate.
- AFT Delegate.
- NEA Delegate.
- Member of Orange County Teachers' Association Presidents.

Finally, my most cherished role is mother to my 15- year- old son. Sean is a 10th grader at Wallkill High School where he is a scholar athlete. He is my pride and joy!