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### **Newburgh Teachers Association Hosts Leadership Conference**

NEWBURGH – Delegates, alternates and committee members of the Newburgh Teachers Association (NTA) attended a Leadership Conference at Union Hall on Saturday, November 4, 2017. NTA President Stacy Moran led the participants through a number of exercises centered on effective communication and one-on-one conversations.

“These are NTA members who take on active leadership roles both within the union and at their schools,” said Moran. “They are the ones who spread the NTA’s issues and concerns to the members in their school buildings.”

Participants role-played in a number of scenarios assuming the roles of organizer (sender of the message), worker (receiver of the message) and observer (an objective party watching the interaction between organizer and worker).

Linda Smith, a Head Delegate and eighth grade math teacher at South Middle School, participated in similar exercises in the past. However, through this role-playing, she learned the importance of listening. “We are teachers,” she said. “We feel the need to educate and talk too much. I made myself aware that my role is to be more of a listener so we can focus on what each person needs. We want them to know that, as delegates, we are here to meet those needs. We just need to know what they are. In turn, we hope to get them more involved with the union.”

Odell Ross, a fifth grade teacher at Gardnertown, became an alternate delegate because she wanted to improve the climate and culture of her school. “I was concerned that there are people in the district who don’t feel empowered,” she said. “As delegates, we hope to open some doors to them.”

Moran is confident that this leadership training will give Head Delegates, delegates and alternatives the proper tools to effectively communicate the issues surrounding the case of Janus v. AFSCME, which aims to decimate the union.

In response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to hear *Janus v. AFSCME*, NYSUT President Andy Pallotta released a statement saying, "This case is a blatant attempt to take away the freedom of working people to join unions and speak up for themselves on the job. New Yorkers, fortunately, have in their DNA an understanding of the critical roles that unions play in growing and protecting the middle class, and providing real economic security for families. NYSUT members see the value of being part of a powerful union – one that gives them a seat at the table and a strong voice in Albany to help them fight for competitive salaries and benefits, protect their retirements and defend their professions."

"Many of our workers know about JANUS," said Jody Terralavoro, a Head Delegate and kindergarten teacher at Gardnertown. "However, many don't know how serious it is. We are going to spend the next few months reaching out to people, hear and share their stories."

At the end of the conference, Moran charged the NTA delegation to go to the members in each building and have one-on-one conversations. "We want to know if they get information from the NTA," said Ms. Smith. "Have they been to events? Do they know what NYSUT has to offer? When we return in January, we will start the conversation about the JANUS case and what it does to us if the case goes through. By June, we want to get members to recommit to the union."

"I feel very empowered," said Ms. Ross. "I am really excited about the framework they gave us. They (the NTA) gave us a really good road map."