



April, 2021--The four percent shorter edition

JETA members voted 85-1 to approve a salary agreement that will give members an increase to base salary and extracurricular activities of 4% per year for the next three years.

We will also be discussing other items with the Superintendent that we have been working on for a long time, but both sides felt that it was best to get the most important thing out of the way before the budget season.

It doesn't take a genius to see that this extension is a result of the Superintendent's and Board of Education's appreciation for our great work during the pandemic. We all have something to be proud of with the way that we have worked together over the past 13 months.

To that end, Ben and the Superintendent have asked us to attend the Board of Education meeting on April 28. As of April 23, we're up to 16 attendees, far more than we expected to say yes. They've relocated the meeting to the High School auditorium as a result—our apologies to the band and musical!!

Also at that meeting, Michelle Benjamin, Molly Byrne, Bethany Mastronardi, Jessica Killian, Christine Klamm, Kalon Riehle, Erika Knapp, and Abbey Morgans' tenure will get voted on. That's almost seven percent of our membership. We've also added Brittany Guadagnolo to the membership, our first physical therapist. The future looks bright!

Our contract vote of 85-1 was remarkable for its speed and percentage of yes votes, but I've heard some rumblings of concerns that I wanted to address. Yes, we voted quickly. In 2020, we were lined up with a very solid agreement with the district when the pandemic hit. Both sides anticipated a big hit to the economy and we had to scale back the plan considerably. We wanted it done.

We also moved to electronic voting, as NYSUT has suggested that all locals do. I instructed Kiki Gugel, our elections chair, to collect email addresses of voters because I thought that was necessary for being sure that no one could accuse anyone of stuffing the ballot box. It turns out I was wrong about that, but Kiki took some grief about that. I'm sorry for both things. We learned by working together that in the future we won't have to record emails. No one has associated anyone's vote with a name, and Kiki has deleted that spreadsheet. Anyone who knows Kiki would agree that you'd be more likely to get someone's voting record out of a brick wall than out of her. She's probably not going to take hard-headed as a compliment, but that's one of the things we've come to appreciate about her through the years.

And that brings us to some sadder news. Both Kiki and Leo McCormack have decided to step out of their positions in the union hierarchy. Kiki's been serving for the past several years as our Insurance chair and Elections chair. Before that, she was the Middle School building rep for a decade. Leo has been a building rep and treasurer for longer than I've been around, but more importantly, he knew all the stuff

from working side by side with Paul Farfaglia in the middle school science wing. Leo is the oldest school of our old school.

Fortunately, both are leaving on good terms, in spite of the fact that I can't thank them enough. (Seriously, kids. You have no idea how good you've got it to be able to say that you worked with those two.) They're going to be training and working alongside their replacements—which is a good thing, since they've been so good at their jobs that no one at JETA.biz actually knows what they do or how they do it.

Stepping up to the plate for Elections will be Chris DiBerardino, who is currently the Social Committee co-chair. Insurance will be covered by a team headed by Meg Fedigan at the Middle School with local in-person representatives in each building. Maureen Fox will be at Elbridge, Mary Maestri will be at JEDIS, and Jen Martin will be at the High School.) Emma Hood lost the union-wide game of Nose Goes and will be taking over as treasurer.

11-point Calibri doesn't do a great job of saying thank you, but switching to 18-point would just look desperate.

One person that got away from our recruitment efforts this month was Mark MacLachlan, who refused the opportunity to be the spokesmodel for JETA swag because of his current contract with Bed, Bath, and Beyond. We'll take your nominations for that spot. The "Hot People of JETA" calendar is currently scheduled for "maybe next year" on account of the bags under everyone's eyes.

Looking ahead to the near future, the Superintendent's Council (which is the name of the Negotiating Committee when we aren't in negotiations) will be meeting with the Superintendent before the Board Meeting on 4/28 to deal with a list of issues that were postponed while working on the salary agreement. The main one, front and center, will be getting teacher input into designing next year's schedule and returning to a saner workload.

I've heard a rumor that the next thing that the Social Committee has planned is going to be nice. I don't want to spoil it, but I can't wait. In fact, I'm hoping to line up a quality control position for it, but I wouldn't want to exploit my position as newsletter editor.

Speaking of which, does anyone want to get up to a dozen fans and become the newsletter editor? Eh, it was worth a shot.

We'll be having a VOTE/COPE sometime this spring. If you don't know, none of our dues go toward lobbying or political action, which is done only by voluntary donations. Twenty percent of those are returned to JETA for local action, and since 2020, our Political Action Committee (head by social studies teachers Amy Giannettino and Dan Avery) is funded entirely by those donations. Since this past election got a former teachers' union president into the majority of the state senate, now is the perfect time for our funds to see some results.

The ad on the following page gives us some money to do some things. I'm not sure what yet since the budget is the next thing on the to-do list.

Two months to go. Let's finish strong. Sorry this one was so short. It's a tough time of the year. You're tougher. GO JETA.

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