Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I want to wish you all the very best in this upcoming year. I hope the holidays were a time filled with laughter and fun. I hope you had a chance to really enjoy all the wonderful things that the season brings: giving and receiving tokens of friendship and love, enjoying the company of people we seldom see, and watching the wonder in a young child’s eyes as he/she opens gifts. That is what I enjoy most about this time of year.

I admit that our holidays tend to be a bit hectic. We had about 40 people (my side of the family) at our house on New Year’s Eve. It was really great to see my brothers, sister, their kids and grandchildren. We had about 15 kids ages 1 to 10 years old running around playing with each other. If it sounds a bit crazy, it was, but wonderful all the same. Every year they come to see us (and each other) and celebrate New Year’s. It is a tradition that started when my mom was still alive. Everyone came to see her. I’m glad we are continuing the tradition. Tradition is important and helps us know where we come from.

I always look forward to the new year. The beginning of another year can be a time of reflection, renewed hope and resolution. Looking back, I think it was a good year. I find myself in good spirits and good health. Though I expect we will have more challenges, I feel confident we will handle them and be successful.

As for hope, I am forever hopeful that more people will learn to appreciate how hard we work for the children in our care and recognize what we do to help them. I hope that funding for needed student programs will not be cut, but expanded. This Governor seems to be waking up a little. I hope he actually gets his act together and learns to support what we know works well, public education.

Our Faculty Association is alive and well because of the work of many. I want to thank all of you who have served on a committee, Rep Council, as an officer or helped in any way to help make this Association operate. You are the fuel that feeds the fire of this organization. By joining in the work you not only help yourself, you help support all of us. It is not the efforts of any one, but the work of many that make us strong and effective. As we join together in a common effort and stand united, we exemplify not only true unionism, but what has made this country great and strong, a group of states united and people of many different backgrounds working together for a common purpose.

There will be many more struggles to maintain and improve our lot in life as educational professionals. As long as we stand together, we will endure and eventually prevail. If we allow ourselves to become divided we will fail.

Looking forward, Doug
## Important Dates for 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exec Board NYSUT</th>
<th>Rep Council 900 bldg. (unless noted otherwise)</th>
<th>TRIAD Meeting Maywood</th>
<th>BOCES BOARD Meeting</th>
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### Student Incentive Award Application

is now available on the Association’s website. Deadline for application to be to Erica Kane is May 1st.

## Capital Region BOCES Faculty Association Leadership

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<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>NAME</th>
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<th>WORK</th>
<th>E-Mail Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>H. Douglas Harple</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVP TA/EA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP Service</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:shortmom02@yahoo.com">shortmom02@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP Spec. Educ.</td>
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<td>CVP C T E</td>
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<td>862-4816</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Barbara Burnham</td>
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<td>862-4720</td>
<td><a href="mailto:baburnham@gmail.com">baburnham@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Deborah Sorvari</td>
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<td>334-1296</td>
<td><a href="mailto:debmom39@nycap.rr.com">debmom39@nycap.rr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Chair</td>
<td>Gina Hanley</td>
<td>862-5332</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ghanley97@gmail.com">ghanley97@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Chair</td>
<td>Kristen Lashway</td>
<td>421-3446</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kris10Lashway@gmail.com">Kris10Lashway@gmail.com</a></td>
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[www.crbfa.org](http://www.crbfa.org)
Dear Constituents:

Another new year has arrived and I wish to extend my well wishes to everyone. May this New Year bring you good health, much laughter and great prosperity.

Through the assistance of the Faculty Association representatives, meetings and workshops I attend regularly, an attempt was made to get our new contracts out to as many people as possible. If you have not received a new copy, please let me know and I will get one to each of you who requests a copy. I recommend for anyone who plans to retire in the near future to be sure you have a copy of the contract you retire under for future reference. It is especially important to those who will be receiving health insurance benefits in retirement.

Speaking of retirement, please take note of the new language in the contract regarding sick leave buyout. You must have in writing, to the Human Resource Office within 90 days, a letter stating your intent to retire. The only exception is if you must retire under disability then the 90 day requirement is waived.

I will be sending a reminder out at the end of this month to our principals regarding selection for the Teaching Assistant Showcase. If you are interested, please notify your principal and he/she will let me know of your interest. Please consider participating, it is a wonderful opportunity to display your many talents to everyone. Reach out to those who have attended or participated. I am sure they will give a strong testimony to the accomplishments of our peers and the admiration of administration.

I was notified by Administration that there will be many changes impacting BOCES in the near future in regards to what Special Education will look like. As you are aware, last year BOCES initiated a program in Schenectady for the Schenectady School District. This program keeps the students in their home school district, which is appealing to policy makers. Policy makers look very seriously at the least restricted environment requirement in Special Education. Perhaps his may be the future to how Special Education students will be educated. I am sure I will be hearing more details in the future and what direction we will be heading. I will keep you posted. Please don’t worry, there will always be a need for Special Education and Career and Technical classes. It may just look a little different than it does today. Just like we as a BOCES look different than we did in the past.

Enjoy the New Year and please look out for each other, especially the newbies. If anyone has any questions, please let me know and I will assist you with your concerns.

In Solidarity, Colleen Condolora

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Some Thoughts on Professional Development by John Fitzpatrick

I am a member of the newly formed PD Special Education Sub-Committee. As we try to streamline ways to get information from everyone about what our individual and collective learning needs are as a diverse group of motivated and conscientious professionals and how to get those needs met as an organization, I stumbled on a really efficient method. Ask Donna Lamkin! Let me tell you my tale of woe (it has a happy ending).

Although I am not a certified math teacher, I am solely responsible for preparing all of my students for the Common Core Algebra exam. The same is true for a few others in our organization and we are a small group with very unique PD skill development needs. The majority of the questions on the Common Core Algebra Regents require the use of the TI-84+ calculator, which we received last year. A group of us have struggled mightily to educate ourselves about its extremely complex menus and command prompts through YouTube, trial and error, asking our actual kids who are in high school, etc., but it was clear to all of us that we were just scratching the surface in terms of teaching our students how to use the device to maximize their points on the test.

I mentioned this briefly, almost in passing, to Donna and instantly things started happening. She made numerous calls and contacts, within and outside of our organization and was unrelenting until, finally, my colleagues and I were invited to the following newly created Vista offering:

Texas Instrument Technology in the Math Classroom - Wednesday, January 13, 2016
(hopefully you were able to make it.)

Thank you, Donna, and remember, learn from my experience and ask for what you need!
Do you know your Association’s History?? Part III
EXECUTIVES AND ACTIVISTS  1971 to Present
Pulled together by Jeanette Christoff and friends.

PRESIDENT:  Mils Mockler, Blake Bayly, Norm Dent, Nan DeSantis, Jim Dunham, Nancy Tonetti, Blake Bailey, H. Douglas Harple

VICE PRESIDENT: Nan DeSantis, Cindy Graham, Bob Weaver, Ross Stonefield, JoAnne Robbins, Joan Ruekert, Jim Dunham, Stan Christoff, Fred Stein, Nancy Tonetti, Craig Kennedy, Mary Breeyear, Karl Voss, Patricia Gollub.

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CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: Bernadette Griffith, Lee Charboneau, Ann Stressel, Sue Rosa, Doris Schuyler, Mary Korytowski, Robin (O’Neil) Gibelius, Lanny Barsale, Mary Breeyear, Sue Davis, Barbara Burnham

TREASURER: Sue Valchovic, Leo Hawkins, Mary Murphy, Joan Kosinski, Helen Schnitzer, Carol Baumes, Linda Martin, Deborah Sorvari

CHAPTER VICE PRESIDENTS
Teachers: Tom O’Brien, John Carmody
Teachers – Votec – CTE: John Carmody, Tom O’Brien, Fran Yankowski, Jeannine Moran

Teachers - Special Ed.: Diana Vaughn, Norm Dent, Larry Licopoli, Fred Stein, Gail Radecky, Flora Fasoldt

Teacher Aides/Assistants – Educational Assistants - Teaching Assistant/Aides: Lillian (Marron) Forsell, Joyce Johnson, Barbara Bishop, Mary Breeyear, Barbara Burnham, Colleen Condolora

Service: Don Gero, Cheryl Bennett, Leah Lee, Doris Schuyler, Barbara Crawford, Louise Spofford, Karen Messercola, Susan Kusalonis, Sandy Smith

GRIEVANCE: Pat Flynn, Bob Waldorf, Jerry Beaudette, Jean Phalan, Jim Dunham, Doris Schuyler, Bill Martin, Brian Bayly, Dick Stigberg, Susan Stewart, EJ Hanley, Kristen Lashway

SASSY SCOOPS/TRIAD: JoAnne Robbins, Marilyn Roundy, Jessie Dinkin, Joan Erlwein, Susan O’Brien, Jane Shane, Leah Lee, Sharon Neal, Kathi Vrooman, Mary Korytowski, Connie Brancasi, Zelda Zeh, Patricia Gordon, Lanny Barsale, Pat Huba, Mimi Mounteer, Barbara Crawford, Susan Kusalonis
– CO-EDITORS HAVE BEEN:
Paula Williams, Susan Stewart, Lanny Barsale, Lois Leonard, Erica Kane

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE:
Joan Hassell, Terry Bennett, Abby Fischer
New Year Greetings to all,

Our Christmas weekend, here in the great Northeast was sunny and warm and travelers from afar had an easy drive before our first taste of winter arrived. I waited until the last minute to transition my garage from a summer room back to a garage and learned something that may be helpful. If your overhead door refuses to stay down, check the edges for cobwebs. It is amazing that something that small can interfere with the light beam and prevent closure.

We can learn from the experiences of others. A cousin recently had a digital thermostat installed. One night, when heat was needed, she found that in order to adjust it she needed to turn on a light, find her close up glasses and punch in info, which was a great deal more involved at 2 A.M. than before, when she could push up the lever, in the dark, until the furnace went on. Newer is not necessarily easier or better.

Another “improvement” that also requires greater attention is the roundabout, especially during heavy traffic times. After almost 60 years of driving with the old red/green, stop/go system, it became automatic, except to scan for cars running a red light. Now we stop, scan 180 degrees, wait for an opening, and decide if it is safe to go or if someone will try to cut you off. Two-lane circles require even more judgment.

Although these are just minor annoyances, they are manageable compared to mastering the endless variety of electronics. We are still living in the dark ages of e-mail, no Facebook, no Twitter. Recently we had the opportunity to observe the magic of a tablet. This incredible little device appears to give access to all of the information in this world. The trick is to navigate through the cascade of information to find the answer you seek. Those who grew up with computers have a foundation to build on, compared with those of us who learned bits and pieces along the way. Younger folks are more attuned to sitting and watching a screen for long periods compared to those who would rather be working at something with visible results.

While computers are now as much a part of every classroom as our “Dick and Jane” readers once were, we question whether some basic arithmetic skills have fallen by the wayside. A shopping trip with a young friend seemed to verify this. She carries no cash but pays with a check, a debit card or credit card. How does she know what is spent and what is left? She will “figure it out later.” Her graduate student progeny needs assistance to write out a check. That was an eye opener. We who worked for 50 cents an hour at babysitting, mowing lawns or some mundane college job, knew exactly how much money we had and how much was yet needed to buy a treasure we had our heart set on. Those budgeting skills are most useful to us seniors, especially since there will be no increase in our Social Security this year.

A recent article from a local financial institution, (which I regretfully cannot find) offers a course in skills we learned in grade school: making change, writing checks, balancing a checkbook and I believe interest. Anyone who has checked an amortization schedule becomes keenly aware of how much of a payment goes toward the interest and how little toward principal for many years. Does anyone know if Common Core includes these survival skill that can determine the quality of life in retirement?

We began this piece anticipating winter’s first weather event, which brought snow, rain, sleet and freezing rain. Shoveling rocks best describes the clean-up and the above freezing temperatures melted some of it.

Until next month. Thank you to all who called, visited, sent e-mail or cards to cheer me up.
New York Regents Vote to Exclude State Tests in Teacher Evaluations

By KATE TAYLOR—DEC. 14, 2015
The New York Times

New York took another step toward removing state test scores as a component in teacher evaluations on Monday, when members of the Board of Regents voted in favor of a four-year moratorium on their use.

The vote completed a sharp reversal of the state’s policy earlier this year, when the Legislature voted to increase the weight of test scores in evaluations.

The Regents were following a recommendation made last week by a task force created by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. It called for revising the state’s standards on what students should know and eliminating state tests when evaluating teachers, at least through the 2018-19 school year.

The task force’s report, which came with Mr. Cuomo’s implicit approval, represented an about face by the governor, a Democrat, who in January had called for test scores to account for half of some teachers’ evaluations.

The governor’s push to increase the weight of test scores upset the teachers’ unions and many parents, and was considered a factor when 20 percent of students sat out state math and reading tests — which had been aligned with the Common Core national benchmarks — this year.

Regents are elected by the Legislature and do not report to the governor.

The vote on Monday was, technically, cast by a committee of the board, although the panel is made up of the entire board. The board will vote again on Tuesday, making the moratorium official. Only one member, the departing chancellor, Merryl H. Tisch, voted against the moratorium.

The board also discussed the results of teacher evaluations from last year. As in previous years, a vast majority of teachers around the state — 96 percent — were rated “effective” or “highly effective.” Roughly 3 percent were rated as “developing,” and less than 1 percent were rated “ineffective.”

In New York City, which has a somewhat tougher evaluation system, a little over 1 percent were rated ineffective; more than 6 percent were rated developing.

In January, arguing to increase the weight of test scores, Mr. Cuomo cited the small number of teachers who were rated ineffective, noting that at the same time only about a third of students were reading or doing math at grade level, as measured by state tests. Removing the test scores from evaluations will almost certainly result in even fewer teachers’ being rated ineffective.

The Regents on Monday also heard a report from Dennis M. Walcott, the former New York City schools chancellor, whom the state appointed in August to lead monitors overseeing the East Ramapo school district in Rockland County, which has been accused of diverting money from its public schools to provide services for yeshiva students.

One of the top recommendations by Mr. Walcott’s three-person team was that the state appoint a monitor with the power to veto decisions by the locally elected school board. A bill to create such a position was passed by the State Assembly earlier this year, but was not brought for a vote in the State Senate.

Roughly 8,500 students, most of them black and Latino, attend the public schools in East Ramapo, while another 23,000 students in the district attend private schools, mostly yeshivas. Orthodox Jews have held a majority of seats on the board since 2005.

Since 2009, the board has made major cuts to the public schools, eliminating over 400 positions and reducing kindergarten to a half day while increasing spending on special education and transportation for private school students.

After the Legislature failed to create a monitor with veto power, the state education commissioner, MaryEllen Elia, appointed the team led by Mr. Walcott to study the district’s operations. The Regents voted on Monday to adopt the monitors’ recommendations.

In an interview, Mr. Walcott said that he had “a great relationship” with the school board president, Yehuda Weissmandl, but that the fragile condition of the district and the level of mistrust of the board among public school parents made it vital to have a monitor with veto power. “There isn’t a guarantee that the current president will be there or that I will be there in the future,” he said.

Mr. Weissmandl in a statement expressed support for some of the report’s recommendations but called the proposal for a monitor with veto power “disappointing,” saying that it was “likely to reprise the divisions and strife we saw in the district last year.”
Dear NYSUT member,

Today we celebrate a significant breakthrough in public education.

Thanks to the dedicated, non-stop activism of NYSUT members in solidarity with parents, the era of test-and-punish is on its way out!

We are proud to share with you this week’s major developments that open the door for a much-needed transformation in public education.

In a just-released report, the state’s Common Core Task Force -- appointed by the governor -- is calling for:

- Empowering New York State teachers to create developmentally appropriate New York State standards for New York State students;
- Immediately reducing the time allotted to state tests, and making future reductions in both test duration and the number of testing days;
- Modifying the new state standards and tests for our students with disabilities and English language learners, and eliminating double testing for our English language learners; and
- Banning for a minimum of four years the use of state test scores in teacher evaluations.

In contrast to the state’s failed implementation of the Common Core, the task force calls for the new standards and curriculum resources to be developed and implemented gradually -- with educator involvement every step of the way, and full transparency to parents.

The state Board of Regents is expected to vote in January on these recommendations, which would then immediately take effect.

Meanwhile, after tireless advocacy by AFT and NEA, President Obama signed legislation yesterday that bars the federal government from mandating the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers.

These changes -- vital to end the high-stakes pressure that has eroded the joy of teaching and learning -- are the direct result of the dedicated activism of NYSUT members and parents.

THANK YOU for everything you have done: the rallies, forums, testimony, letters, e-blasts, protests and more. Your union called, and you answered.
SED seeks input on new Global Regents exam

SED is urging teachers to complete an online survey on the format of the Global History and Geography Regents exam that will be first administered in June 2018. This survey is precedent setting because it's the first time SED has asked the field to comment on any Regents exam format. http://www.engageny.org/content/global-history-and-geography-regents-exam-development-survey

IMPORTANT dates to remember on the 2016 legislative calendar

- NYSUT's Committee of 100 lobby day, which brings hundreds of volunteer activists to Albany to share their front-line experiences with legislators, is scheduled for March 7-8. A follow-up in-district Committee of 100 is slated for May 19-20.
- NYSUT's legislative reception is scheduled for Feb. 1 and its higher education lobby day is Feb. 24-25.
- NYSUT's nurses and health-care professionals lobby day is May 10, one week before the annual statewide school budget vote and school board elections on May 17.
- NOTE: The governor last week changed the date of his "state of the state" address to Jan. 13. Again this year, as he did last year, he will combine the speech with presentation of his executive budget proposal.
Women in unions, SAVE THE DATE! July 30 – Aug. 3
The 41st NE Summer School For Women in Unions and Worker Organizations will be held at the School for Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ.

Medicare Part B premiums announced for 2016
- As there is no cost of living increase for Social Security benefits, 70 percent of Medicare beneficiaries will be "held harmless" from a premium increase for Medicare Part B. They will continue to pay the current standard premium of $104.90.
- The remaining 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are not subject to the "hold harmless" provision. These beneficiaries include those not collecting Social Security; those enrolling in Medicare Part B in 2016; beneficiaries whose premium is paid by Medicaid, and higher income beneficiaries.
- Initially, it was projected that beneficiaries not held harmless would be subject to a 52 percent premium increase. Instead, as a result of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, they will pay a standard Part B premium of $121.80 in 2016, which is a 16 percent increase. Higher income beneficiaries will pay premiums ranging from $170.50-$389.80 depending on their income.

Sign-up for the new NYSUT Social Justice Newsletter
Signing up is simple: Log in to your "My NYSUT" account, select "Edit Profile" in the section menu, expand the "Email Subscriptions" selection on the resulting page, and you will be on the list to get our first newsletter in the next month.

Curriculum helps illuminate the crisis in Syria
- NYSUT member Andrew Beiter has created a curriculum called, "I Am Syria" and after the recent attacks on Paris, his work is even more relevant to classrooms. See it on NYSUT's curriculum resources page.
- NYSUT supports the work of its members around the state and their efforts to bring social justice issues into the classroom. If you have an outstanding Social Justice lesson or curriculum that you would like us to consider for this site, please email it to Sonia Basko at sbasko@nysutmail.org and in the subject box please write: Social Justice Curriculum Submission.

Magee reaches out to retirees
- President Karen Magee recorded this video [http://www.nysut.org/news/2015/november/for-nysut-retirees-a-thank-you-and-a-call-to-action] as "a heartfelt ‘thank you’ and an urgent call-to-action" for NYSUT retirees.
- The legacy NYSUT retirees helped build is under attack, she says. Deep-pocketed billionaires are taking aim at unions in the courts, in state legislatures and beyond. Watch the video to learn more about how you can take a stand against these forces by staying active and involved.

The facts about VOTE-COPE, NYSUT's political action fund
- VOTE-COPE activities are funded entirely through voluntary contributions from NYSUT members.
- Up to 40 percent of a local union’s contribution is rebated to the local for use in local elections and budget campaigns at home.
- NYSUT support for candidates for public office is NOT determined by party affiliation but by a politician’s record of support for union members' issues.
Regardless of party, the critical issue is the level of commitment the candidate has demonstrated to union members and to quality service. By supporting these public officials who share the union’s values, VOTE-COPE has helped combat attacks against tenure, seniority rights and the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law.
State education leaders recently released new statewide draft science standards and they want your feedback.

“As state leaders continue to move forward with the development of new statewide science standards, it’s important for them to receive insights directly from our many publics,” said Capital Region BOCES Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Lynne Wells.

An online survey is now available to gather input from educators, parents, business leaders, community members and others with an interest in the future of science education in our public schools. Prior to taking the survey, please take some time to review the draft NYS P-12 Science Learning Standards. [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/mst/sci/nys-p12-science-ls.html](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/mst/sci/nys-p12-science-ls.html)

The New York State Education Department’s (NYSED) online survey will be available through Feb. 5, 2016.

Feedback received will shape a final recommendation that likely will go to the Board of Regents later this winter for discussion and eventual approval.

Learn more

Local educators are invited to join Capital Region BOCES officials at 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road, Albany on Tuesday, Jan. 26, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. to learn more about the draft standards and collaboratively complete the survey. View details on MyLearningPlan.

“We are happy to create awareness about the draft standards and provide an opportunity for people to learn about how to express their opinions directly to the State Education Department on this important topic,” said Wells.

More than 65 local educators came together at BOCES last month for a unique professional development opportunity where they learned more about the draft standards from NYSED Science Associate Will Jaacks and also began developing STEM-related district goals that support college and career readiness in science, technology, engineering, math and literacy.

Additional learning opportunities for local educators are being planned and will be shared as appropriate.

For more information, contact Capital Region BOCES Managing Program Coordinator STEM and 21st Century Skills Laura Lehtonen at 518-464-3999, laura.lehtonen@neric.org, who serves on the New York State Science Steering Committee and Science Education Consortium.
CAPITAL REGION BOCIES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

1015 Watervliet Shaker Road
Albany, NY 12205

2016-2018 NOMINATIONS FORM

It’s that time of year again, and you know how important it is to get involved. It’s time to look to yourself and your colleagues for new faces to add to those familiar faces who have been providing strong leadership for our organization. Make your recommendations and return to the address below. Deadline is February 29, 2016.

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<td>President</td>
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Nominate in your Chapter only:

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Special Education Chapter VP</td>
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<td>CTE Chapter VP</td>
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<td>TA/EA Chapter VP</td>
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<td>Service Chapter VP</td>
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Submitted by: __________________________

Print Name __________________________ Signature __________________________

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Capital Region BOCES employees that are presently employed as teachers, TAs, administrative roles and retirees who have lost loved ones over the past few months:

  Denice Capece  
  Randy Cole  
  Pat Gollub  
  Jeff Guthrie  
  Cindy Hamel  
  Nancy Jones  
  Teresa Molineaux  
  Tulla Pangburn

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**Sunshine Chairperson**

If you know of someone who could use a little cheering up, our sympathy, or a get well card, please contact:

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