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NEWS
COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

March 2025

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American Federation
of School Administrators,
AFL-CIO Local 1

School-Based Investigations To Be Reduced

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

CSA's last contract established a joint committee to address the excessive number of school-based investigations. CSA has recently reached an agreement with the DOE that should make a significant reduction in the investigations that principals must conduct next school year.

One of the greatest challenges is that cases regarding unprofessional conduct are too often being called in as investigations when they simply shouldn't be. So, first and foremost, the DOE will consult with us to provide training on which allegations must be reported and when alleged misconduct is not required to report to OSI or SCI. This will include clarification about the differences between administrative referrals and SBIs.

School leaders should focus on what will most

Continued on Page 3

Directors Ratify ECE Contract

BY CRAIG DIFOLCO

Every year in early April, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, sponsors an annual celebration they call the Week of the Young Child. Fitting then that as we celebrate CSA's Early Childhood Education members who work in CBO-based centers, we are also celebrating their brand new contract. These ECE directors and assistant directors recently ratified their new city-funded agreement with the Day Care Council, hashed out over long negotiations with the CSA leadership team, with 91 percent approval.

CSA congratulates all these hard-working ECE

Continued on Page 3

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

A Lonely Job? Think Again

BY CHUCK WILBANKS

Rhonda Perry took the helm of Manhattan's MS 255 Salk School of Science in 2001, and ever since has worked to shape it into one of New York City's most distinguished middle schools. In a national recognition of all those efforts, earlier this school year the US Department of Education honored Ms. Perry and her school with a Blue Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education.

The award recognized Salk as both an exemplary high performing school and one which showed significant progress in closing achievement gaps between student subgroups. For Ms. Perry, it was also a testament to a strong and vibrant school community, and a passionate staff.

"Being here as long as I have has allowed me to hire high quality teachers who are learners themselves," Ms. Perry says. "They're a compassionate, collaborative group who like to learn, and that gets transmitted to our students."

"People say being a principal is a lonely job, but when you have a great team, it is so much more doable. People stay here: Our parent coordinator has been here 20 years; we have veteran teachers who have been here their entire careers. Marsha Wallace became the AP after working 18 years here teaching science. We all work well together. People know that I value their ideas and what they bring. They'll roll up their sleeves and do anything."

She describes a school with a deeply rooted culture of literacy and scientific inquiry which prepares students to be lifelong learners. Many graduates have gone on to careers in medicine and science, often returning to share their journeys. Salk maintains a partnership with NYU's School of Medicine, originally established in 1995 under then-Superintendent Anthony Alvarado, providing students with unique exposure to medical and research fields.

One of the school's defining features is its emphasis on writing – throughout the curriculum – to ensure that students develop strong communication skills alongside their scientific training and curiosity.

Ms. Perry grew up in New York City, where she attended public schools. She went on to study Spanish literature at Barnard College with a minor in education. She began her career as a teacher of Spanish and history in an alternative high school before being tapped to help launch the School of the Future in Manhattan. After a decade of work there, including teaching and admissions work, she joined a leadership program at Baruch College and was offered the principalship at Salk just days before the 9/11 attacks. Ms. Perry is a 2013 Cahn fellow, and for three years served on the Cahn Fellows Programs Board of Directors.

Though eligible for retirement, Perry remains devoted to Salk and its mission.

"It's a great place," she says. "It's why I've stayed this long. Many parents say that, and they really appreciate the level of work we do and how we care for the kids. It would be a lot to lose, to walk away from a wonderful community like this."

"I loved school growing up, and I'm happy to give back to New York City. That's another reason I'm happy to stay here and work."



■ Rhonda Perry,
Principal, MS 255
Salk School of
Science

Lobby Day At The Capitol

Political Action In Albany



■ Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow from Mount Vernon, the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, discusses CSA's legislative agenda with CSA First Vice President Stamo K. Rosenberg and Retiree Chapter Director Mark Brodsky. More than 50 active CSA members and retirees traveled to Albany on March 12-13 to urge lawmakers to consider a range of proposals, including nuanced considerations of poverty and student needs when considering how to budget for the state's schools.

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Council of School Supervisors & Administrators

American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO, Local 1

40 Rector St., NY, NY 10006
Phone: (212) 823-2020
Fax: (212) 962-6130
www.csa-nyc.org

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CSA NEWS

Editor

Chuck Wilbanks

Design Consultant

Michele Pacheco

Production Assistant

Christine Altman

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Here's To APs! Pillars Of Every School

Aiding Culture, Climate – And Safety By Henry D. Rubio

In the second week of April, we celebrate National Assistant Principals Week, a chance to recognize the invaluable contributions of our APs in shaping the success of our schools. CSA, of course, honors our APs year-round, but the week of April 7th presents a unique opportunity to highlight for everyone the profound impact they have on students, teachers, parents, and their entire school communities.

No school leader can do this work alone. Successful leadership requires a team of trusted allies who can navigate the complexities of their roles together. Assistant principals serve as a principal's closest confidants, sounding boards, and are a direct extension of the school principal. Whether it's resolving conflicts, analyzing school data, or implementing new policies, anyone who has ever spent time in a school recognizes that APs are integral to the decision-making that keeps everything running smoothly.

For many in school communities, an assistant principal is the first person who students and parents see when they walk through the door. They are there to welcome a nervous child on their first day, answer a concerned guardian's questions, or support a new teacher who needs guidance. They are often the face of the school, and their presence ensures that every stakeholder feels supported and heard.

Culture and climate shape everything—from student behavior to teacher morale to academic achievement. APs help set the tone for discipline and play a central role in fostering school spirit. They lead initiatives that build a sense of community: organizing school-wide events, mentoring student leaders, and developing programs that support social-emotional learning. In a moment when diversity and inclusion efforts are under attack nationally, APs continue to help us ensure that all students—regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic background, or immigration status—feel welcome. They are the ones working on the ground to implement culturally responsive curriculum, create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students, and ensure that restorative justice practices are real, actionable policies.

APs serve as critical mediators within the school. They navigate complex conversations between teachers and parents, diffuse tensions among students, and step in when conflicts arise between staff members. Their ability to listen, de-escalate, and problem-solve ensures that small issues don't turn into larger disruptions.

The mental health crisis in our schools has reached an unprecedented level. COVID may have exacerbated the problem, but social media and other factors are contributing to a generation of students struggling with focus, anxiety, and depression. APs are often the first adults students turn to when they are struggling. They provide informal counseling and work tirelessly to ensure that students feel supported, not just academically, but emotionally. And it's not just students; APs are also emotional support for teachers.

APs manage the critical operational aspects that make schools function. They oversee safety and security, coordinate schedules, and manage crises. They find themselves making high-stakes decisions on the fly when



a principal is otherwise engaged. We all know that safety challenges are only increasing. In our testimony on the mayor's preliminary budget that we recently submitted at a public city council hearing, we raised our collective concerns about growing concerns in schools. APs are often the first responders with a student in distress, an emergency lockdown, or a community incident that spills into the school building.

One of our union's core priorities has been advocating an assistant principal in every school—not just as a matter of efficiency, but as a matter of safety. When a principal is out of the building, an AP ensures that all operations continue seamlessly. Without an AP present, schools are left without critical leadership in moments of crisis. In schools without an AP, staff must scramble to fill the gaps. Teachers are pulled away from instruction,

office personnel are stretched thin, and principals find themselves managing everything alone—often at the expense of long-term planning and leadership. Ensuring every school has an AP isn't just about leadership; it's about sustainability.

Unbelievably, there are still schools in our system that do not have an assistant principal. We have made significant progress in reducing this number, and every year we make more progress. Our current Chancellor and her team agree that having an AP in every school is the best practice, she is being helpful in moving the needle—she knows firsthand since she was an AP and a New York City principal herself—and we won't stop pushing forward until this becomes a reality across our system.

With the new class size law, the system is seeing an influx of teachers, and this must be done with a proportional increase in assistant principals, who are responsible for their supervision, evaluation, and professional development. APs play a pivotal role in mentoring new teachers, observing classrooms, and ensuring that professional growth aligns with student success. Expanding our teaching workforce without expanding the number of APs would be a costly self-inflicted wound. APs ensure that staff transition from the theoretical world of preparation programs to the realities of classroom instruction in this city. Without their leadership, we risk losing new teachers to burnout and frustration before they even have the chance to find their footing.

If we truly want to honor the work of our assistant principals, we must ensure they have the resources they need to succeed,

the support they deserve, and the fair supervision workload to ensure student success. Recognition during this week is important, but real appreciation comes from action—ensuring that every school has an AP, fighting for fair policies that strengthen their roles, acknowledging their leadership, and providing the conditions that allow them to accelerate student success. This Assistant Principals Week, let's take a moment to thank them for their dedication, acknowledge their contributions, and join us in our ongoing fight to make sure every school has the full leadership team it deserves to make New York City the best school district in the country.

Henry D. Rubio is president of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Women's Empowerment



■ On March 8, CSA leadership celebrated Women's History Month and International Women's Day with OWE-CSA, our union's women's association, at their annual gala where they presented leadership awards to members and scholarships to deserving students.

Investigations: ‘Significant Reduction’

Continued from Page 1

impact students’ lives, and given the current volume of investigations, it’s clear principals must be provided with additional investigative support. With our new agreement, the DOE will now work with CSA to create central investigator positions, and the posting will be open to all excessed and central supervisors. “Our members are school leaders, not investigators, and with this agreement we are taking a genuine step

CSA And The Joint Committee Will Seek Additional Ways To Reduce Caseloads

to reduce the extraordinary case volume the system has unfairly expected them to handle,” said

CSA General Counsel David Grandwetter.

CSA and the DOE looked closely at which other types of specific violations that should be taken of principal’s plates. Next year, any allegations of FERPA violations will be retained by OSI and any allegations that are the basis for an arrest will also be retained by OSI.

A420 and 421 timelines are now extended from 15 school days to 30 school days, and, if

principals need additional time, it won’t be unreasonably denied. For any other than A-420 and A-421 cases, the timeframes currently in place will be eliminated, and principals will now have 30 school days to determine whether a complaint is substantiated. For the first time, senior field counsel will have time requirements to get back to principals - they will review findings and must reply within 15 school days. If they don’t meet

that obligation, principals can finalize the investigation, issue a disciplinary letter, if need be, and close the investigation.

The goal of this agreement is to reduce the number of School-Based Investigations that principals must take on by over 25 percent. CSA will continue to meet with the joint committee to explore additional ways to reduce principals’ caseloads, and CSA will update you on the ongoing implementation of this agreement.

ECE Directors Vote To Ratify Contract

Continued from Page 1

Directors and Assistant Directors, and CSA leaders also are grateful to DOE based members for standing with your colleagues in solidarity.

CSA’s focus now turns toward effectively implementing this agreement and strategizing how to achieve even more to put these members on a closer

New Committee To Explore And Expand ECE Professional Development

pathway to parity with their DOE counterparts. We will question the Office of Labor Relations on when centers can expect to receive retro-payments, when payments will begin to reflect salary increases, and when the Day Care Council CSA Welfare Fund will receive its increased funding.

Below is a summary of the memo-

randum of agreement that CSA reached with the Day Care Council.

Term The contract runs retroactively from October 1, 2020, through March 31, 2028.

Salary Increases: ECE Directors and Assistant Directors will receive a cumulative wage increase of 33.62% over the entirety of the contract. All salary increases and applicable payments will be retroactive to October 1, 2020, and the retroactive salary will be paid in a lump sum. Raises will be paid as follows:

- Effective October 1, 2020 – 4.34% Retroactive
- Effective October 1, 2021 – 10.21% Retroactive
- Effective October 1, 2022 – 3% Retroactive
- Effective October 1, 2023 – 3% Retroactive
- Effective October 1, 2024 – 3% Retroactive
- Effective March 31, 2025 – 3%
- Effective March 31, 2026 – 3.25%

The minimum city-funded Director’s salaries shall be at least 6% higher than the City-authorized UPK teacher’s rate (including retention bonuses or any

other wage compensation, and the minimum city-funded Assistant Director’s salaries shall be at least 3% higher.

Ratification Bonus: Upon ratification, each full-time DCE Director and Assistant Director shall receive a \$2,000 lump sum ratification bonus. The bonus is prorated for part-time employees.

Annual Retention Payment: Full-time employees shall receive a recurring retention bonus of \$1,235, with a look-back period determining eligibility based on time worked in that year.

Extended Day and Extended Year Program Bonus: Employees in extended day and extended year programs who work the full summer shall receive an additional payment of approximately \$1,800.

Welfare Fund Contributions: One-time contribution of \$1,000 per full-time employee upon ratification (prorated for part-time employees).

- One-time lump sum contribution of over \$300,000 to the welfare fund.
- A recurring increase of \$412.50 to the welfare contribution per year per full-time member shall take effect on October 1, 2027.

Professional Development & Career Growth

This contract establishes a new committee to explore and expand professional development and certification opportunities for ECE Directors and Assistant Directors in CBO-based programs.

Workplace Rights & Consultation

A new contractual provision mandates monthly consultations between CSA and the Day Care Council. These meetings will ensure ongoing dialogue about working conditions and concerns, as well as the implementation of this agreement.

Paid Holidays: Juneteenth (June 19th) is now a fully recognized paid holiday for ECE Directors and Assistant Directors.

Certified Directors Pool: To ensure safety and certified supervisory coverage in the event of unforeseen or planned absences of Directors, the Day Care Council of New York (DCCNY) will endorse the creation of a pool of Certified Directors. The Certified Directors Pool will provide continuity of supervision and ensure stability in ECE center leadership.

State High School Principal of the Year

DeWitt Clinton High Principal Honored

BY SAANYS STAFF

Pierre Orbe, principal of DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, was named the 2025 New York State High School Principal of the Year by the School Administrators Association of New York State. SAANYS presents the award every year to a high school principal who has set the pace, character, and quality of education for students in their school.

When Mr. Orbe took the helm at DeWitt Clinton in 2017, graduation rates stood at 48 percent, college readiness 28 percent, and only 34 percent of students enrolled in college or postsecondary programs within six months of graduating. The school was also known as one of the most dangerous in New York City.



■ Pierre Orbe, principal, DeWitt Clinton HS, Bronx.

Under his leadership, graduation rates have reached as high as 97 percent, college readiness is at 60 percent, college enrollment has surged to 65 percent. And 91 percent of students have completed approved college or career preparatory courses and exams.

Mr. Orbe attributes the

turnaround to a deep commitment to student voice, instructional excellence, staff collaboration and leadership development.

AP Jennifer Lovejoy recalls Orbe’s impact upon his arrival at DeWitt Clinton: “He initiated a collaborative effort with assistant principals and teacher leaders to analyze data using the DataWise Inquiry Process. Teachers use the data to inform instruction, and Regents scores have risen from below 35 percent to about 75 percent in ELA and Math.”

Ms. Lovejoy also notes the school’s cultural transformation: “By fostering a safe and supportive environment, he has created a school where students take an active role in their education.”

Mr. Orbe earned a bachelor’s degree from Drew University, a master’s degree in education from New York University, and is completing his doctorate in Educational Leadership from Russell Sage College. He is also a member of CSA’s Executive Board.

Mr. Orbe and fellow 2025 award winners will be recognized at SAANYS’ annual awards celebration on May 2 at the Desmond Hotel – Crown Plaza in Albany, New York. He will also represent New York State as the high school principal of the year, sponsored by SAANYS’ national affiliate, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). NASSP will select the National High School Principal of the Year from all state finalists.

ABENY Awards, Scholarship

The Association of Black Educators of New York is offering scholarships and special awards. Graduating high school seniors in the public schools may download a scholarship application at the ABENY website: <https://www.abenyinc.wildapricot.org/scholarship>

The winners will be honored at two special programs. On Saturday, May 31, from 1 - 3 pm, a celebration in their honor will take place at the Brooklyn Public Library, 286 Cadman Plaza West. The scholars will also be honored at the Annual ABENY Scholarship and Awards Luncheon, Saturday, June 14, 12 - 5 pm, at Antun’s in Queens Village. The deadline for scholarship applications is April 30.

ABENY is also offering service awards to students in all public schools, all grade levels, within the five boroughs. The deadline for nominations is May 31.

For more information about Sheilah Bobo, Education Chair, at sheilahbobo@gmail.com or (917) 412-9099.

NATION Labor

WASHINGTON

Teacher Shortages

Overall, the supply of teachers has improved, but shortages are ongoing in the subjects of science and special education. Recent research suggests that declining working conditions and a lack of support, particularly in special ed, could impact stability in the future. Though focused on Washington, the trend is similar across the country. (EducationWeek)

NORTH DAKOTA

Speed Waivers

The USDA announced waivers to allow an increase in line speeds in both poultry and pork plants. The union that represents plant workers said the measure will result in more injuries. RWDSU (Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union represents 100,000 members throughout the United States. (KFGO)

OHIO

Postal Protests

Postal workers are showing their displeasure over proposed major changes to the Postal Service, including cutting 10,000 jobs and billions of dollars from the postal budget. The 51 million rural households and businesses that the US Postal Service serves could be the first to feel the impact of these changes that might result in reduced access to postal facilities and fewer delivery days. (www.scrippsnews.com)

PENNSYLVANIA

Child Labor Fines

A bill that seeks to double fines against employers for violating Pennsylvania's Child Labor Act passed the House recently, but its future is uncertain in the Senate. Representatives in support of the measure cite data that reflects a 43 percent rise in child labor law cases in the state in 2022-23. Opponents believe the measure could penalize small businesses and jeopardize teen jobs. They further stated there have been few violations and convictions in recent years. (alliednews.com)

ILLINOIS

Standing Together

The Chicago Teachers Union Local 1 and the Chicago Fire Fighters Local 2 joined forces to settle their contracts, releasing a joint statement and plans for an event. The statement said in part, "We stand together in solidarity of each other's contract demands as they are the foundations to a stronger school system for our children and a better emergency response network to keep us all safe." (ctulocal1.org)

— COMPILED BY
CHRISTINE ALTMAN

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

CSA has established five \$3,000 scholarships for New York City public school students graduating this year and attending college in the Fall, including community college. Students with demonstrable leadership skills, and those who have overcome hardships to reach graduation, are encouraged to apply. The award is not based on the GPA or SAT scores, and applicants need not provide them or a transcript. CSA Scholarship Guidelines ask that members recommend a student who they believe shows potential and academic promise.

This year, we are also thrilled to introduce a sixth scholarship, the Donald Singer Scholarship, in honor of Mr. Donald Singer's significant contributions and his tenure as former CSA president. This additional scholarship will be awarded to the student with the standout essay among the Five Borough



■ One of last year's CSA Scholarship winners, Helen Cordova. This year's deadlines are fast approaching.

Scholarship recipients.

Student applications must be submitted by April 22, 2025. Please go to the CSA website for application and details.

CSA "Child of a Member" Scholarship CSA is proud to announce our annual "Child of a Member"

Scholarship, offering \$10,000 to the child of an in-service member. This scholarship supports one graduating senior entering college this fall, applicable to students from any high school background.

Interested applicants must submit their application by April 22, 2025. Please note it is mandatory for the scholarship

recipient to be present at the CSA Scholarship Dinner on June 11, 2025, at The Marriott, LaGuardia.

Please go to the CSA website for application and details.

CSA Veteran's Child College Scholarship Application

We are thrilled to introduce the CSA Veteran's Child College Scholarship Program, a new initiative sponsored by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) and CSA. This \$1500 scholarship is open to children and step-children of CSA members who are veterans and in good standing. It is open to graduating seniors attending college and students already enrolled in college.

Interested applicants must submit their application by April 22, 2025. Please send an email to CSAveteranschild-scholarship2025@csa-nyc.org if you have any questions. Please go to the CSA website for application and details.

Welfare Fund Update New Specs, And Check Your Mail

Susan
Barone



Retiring? Call Us To Inquire About How To Secure Your Benefits And Enroll In The Retiree Chapter

As we spring into April, we have exciting news for members living outside of the NYC metro area. GVS and Vision Works have recently partnered to offer the Vision Works network to our members throughout the country. This national retailer has nearly 800 locations throughout the United States, with approximately 80 locations throughout NY State. For NY, they have a very good concentration on Long Island and upstate NY. For members who wish to seek an in-network provider, Vision Works has now expanded your options.

For members who have a spouse with a vision plan, in particular those with a spouse whose plan is also General Vision Services, you may use both union benefits for your optical. To benefit from this, if you go in-network, you may use one union benefit per pair of glasses. In other words, to use both benefits, you must purchase two pair of glasses. Alternatively, if you go out of network, you may apply both benefits to the cost of one or more glasses. This way, if you spend more than \$150 on your out-of-network glasses, you may apply both union benefits for reimbursement.

Last year, we notified you of an Emblem Health/GHI Dependent Audit, conducted by the Office of Labor Relations, which manages major medical coverage for all NYC employees and their dependents. In this stage of the audit, a letter from OLR requesting proof of your dependents is being mailed to 20 percent of the city's employees. Please do not delay in responding with the appropriate documentation. If you do not respond to the audit, OLR will deem your dependents no longer active and will terminate their health insurance. In the coming fiscal year, the remaining 80 percent of the city work force will receive the letter. Again, be sure to check your mail and return the form! And remember: HR Connect provides your address to the city, so if you have moved, you must update your address with HR Connect. If you don't, the city will mail

your letter to the wrong address and possibly discontinue medical insurance for your dependents based on your non-response to the audit. If you're a retired member who is moving, you must update your address directly with OLR.

The Fund office has received several inquiries from Members who are considering retiring often call the Fund office to inquire about how to secure their health benefits in retirement and how to enroll in the Retiree Chapter. The Welfare Fund is here to assist! Please include us in your retirement journey by sending the Fund office a copy of your TRS retirement receipts along with a copy of your health benefits application and CSA Retiree Welfare Fund enrollment form, as soon as you have them, so we can ensure your medical and retiree Welfare Fund benefits are secured as you transition from in-service to retired. And if you have not attended a Pre-Retirement workshop contact Mark Brodsky to be added to the waitlist for our next workshop. Additionally, we have added a Pre-Retirement workshop geared specifically for our EA's on Wednesday, May 28th. Stay tuned for Member Updates for registration details.

On a final note, for those members who are turning 65 this year (or next) we will be hosting a special Turning 65 Webinar to assist you with the process of applying for Medicare. Those members who are retired and turning 65 must apply to Medicare during the enrollment period (up to three months prior to 65) to avoid costly penalties. If you plan to keep working beyond your 65th birthday, while applying for Medicare at 65 is not required, you do have options to apply for Medicare Part A (at no cost) and then apply for Medicare Part B at retirement. These and more frequently asked questions will be covered during the webinar which will be live on Tuesday, June 3, at 4:30 pm. Stay tuned for Member Updates with a registration link.

Susan Barone is Director of the CSA Welfare Fund.

POLITICS

Walking The Halls Of Albany With CSA Advocates On Annual Lobby Day



■ A small army of CSA advocates gather for their yearly photograph in front of the iconic “I Love NY” installation in the state capitol before beginning their visits with lawmakers.

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

In mid-March, with budget season in Albany in full swing, a large group of active and retired CSA members traveled to the state capitol to emphasize CSA’s positions on a variety of matters that affect educators and the school communities of New York City.

The union’s advocates met with a wide variety of influential lawmakers from New York City and around the state. All were receptive and grateful for the visits, with many remarking that even though they are cognizant of CSA’s positions on many issues, the personal visits are still extremely valuable.

The members thanked lawmakers for their commitment to fully funding Foundation Aid. However, the governor’s proposed changes to the formula would mean the city’s schools would receive \$350 million less. CSA urged the governor and lawmakers to include the following adjustments:

Regional Cost Indexes: The building aid formula is updated regularly to adjust higher costs in several regions across the State. The Foundation Aid formula should be similarly adjusted to reflect the true, elevated cost of educating students in New York City.

Special Education Weights: Implement tiered weights for special education students to reflect varying needs. The current formula applies the same weight

to all special education students, regardless of the severity of each student’s disability, or whether the students have physical or intellectual disabilities as articulated in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Temporary Housing Weights: Increase funding to address the needs of homeless students, including the recent influx of asylum-seeking students and English Language Learners. The number of homeless public-school students in New York City has reached nearly 120,000, an all-time high.

CSA requested increased funding for the Executive Leadership Institute and Advanced Leadership Program for Aspiring Principals to expand professional development services, support “science of reading” training, restorative practices, mental health programs, and mentoring for new principals. Increased access to professional development is essential to address high

Continued on Page 6



■ AP Dwight Chase of Brooklyn talks politics with District 41 Assemblyman Kalman Yeger after a breakfast hosted by CSA.



■ Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, far left, chairman of the Assembly’s education committee, meeting with advocates, including CSA Director of Political Affairs Mabel Sarduy to his left. At far right are CSA Executive Vice President Dale Kelly, First Vice President Stamo K. Rosenberg, Retiree Chapter Director Mark Brodsky, and SAANYS Executive Director Jennifer L. Carlson.

Visit To Capitol, Lobbying For CSA

Continued from Page 5

turnover rates among school leaders.

The advocates noted that caps placed on COLA-covered benefits erode the retirement income of affected retirees. So CSA supports legislation by Sen. Robert Jackson and Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato to address that problem.

New York City schools are operating without an assistant principal, and this is putting both student safety and instructional leadership at risk. CSA advocates emphasized CSA's strong support for legislation introduced by Sen. John Liu requiring an assistant principal in every NYC school.

The advocates also pushed for increased funding for New York City's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs by raising the per-pupil

funding cap to ensure schools have the resources needed for high-quality instruction, industry certifications, and up-to-date technology, as well as extending CTE funding to include 9th-grade students, allowing them to build foundational skills earlier and gain access to hands-on learning opportunities.

The CSA lobbyists also urged increased investment in Community Schools, which provide essential wraparound services for students and families in disadvantaged communities. When paired with robust CTE programming, Community Schools become powerful engines of economic mobility, ensuring that every student, regardless of background, graduates with a pathway to college or a well-paying career.



■ State Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky, center, a great friend of CSA, surrounded by the team of CSA advocates from Long Island.

Travel Desk

GARY GOLDSTEIN

Exploration And Vacationing On Land Or By Sea

Azamara Onward

May 22- June 1, 2025

Depart Rome and sail to Florence, Portovenere, Villefranche, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Gibraltar and Lisbon (overnight). Rates begin at \$3048.47 pp dbl. Add optional insurance, air and pre/post stays.

Sail The Douro

July 2 - 11, 2025

Spend two nights in Lisbon. Sail the Viking Torgil to the Douro River Valley, the world's oldest demarcated wine region and UNESCO site with 5 star Viking River Cruise. Pre and post extensions to Madrid, Santiago and Barcelona available. Rates begin at \$4674 pp double. Add air, insurance and pre/post trips.

Canadian Rockies

July 20 - 27, 2025

Fly to Vancouver. Explore the Canadian Rockies partially by Rocky Mountaineer rail. Visit Vancouver, Kamloops, Coast Mountains, Lake Louise, Banff, Icefields Parkway. Return from Calgary. Rates include air JFK, rail travel, hotels, sightseeing and 13 meals. \$7,999 pp dbl (rate valid until Nov. 30, 2024). Add insurance, rail upgrade and pre/post hotels.

Grand Hawaiian Trip

Aug. 7 - 19, 2025

Visit Honolulu, Kona (Big Island), Maui and Kauai. Escorted tour includes rt air, sightseeing, 12 breakfasts and 6 dinners. This is out 14 months prior as demand for Hawaii is huge! Deposit is refundable until Jan. 17. Air from NY and inter-islands included. \$7,799 pp dbl - includes 6 dinners and 12 breakfasts. Call (732) 786-0314 or email Gary Goldstein at blgtravel26@aol.com for brochure.

Caribbean Cruise

Aug. 19 - 29, 2025

Sail from New York or Brooklyn on the Island Princess to Grand Turk,



■ Penguin reserve in the Beagle Channel, Ushuaia, Argentina: "The End of The World."

Amber Cove (Dominican Republic), San Juan, and Bermuda (2 days). From \$1,711pp-dbl including all taxes, beverages, tips and wifi. Air and optional insurance not included.

Canada/New England

Sept. 13 - 20, 2025

Sail on the beautiful Enchanted Princess from the port of either New York or Brooklyn. Sail to Newport, Boston, Portland, St. John (Bay of Fundy), Halifax, return to NYC. Rates begin at \$1,016 pp, dbl including port/gov't. Fees (subject to availability). Add insurance if desired.

Tropical Costa Rica

Dec. 8 - 16, 2025

Join this land tour to include San Jose, Arenal Volcano, Cano Negro wildlife tour, Monteverde Cloud Forest, Guanacaste Beach. 3 nite pre jungle tour available at additional cost. Including

air from JFK, (other gateways available); 14 meals \$2,999 pp dbl; \$3,499 single. 16 seats available.

Panama Canal Cruise

Jan. 5 - 21, 2026

(Ft. Lauderdale to Los Angeles) Sail on the beautiful Coral Princess. Visit Cartagena, Panama City, Puntarenas (Costa Rica), Mexican ports of Puerto Chiapas, Huatulco, and Puerto Vallarta and disembarking in Los Angeles. Rates begin at \$2,249pp dbl: Additional for air and insurance.

President's Week

Feb. 15 - 22, 2026

Sail the Grand Princess, round trip Puerto Rico. Visit St. Croix, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada and Barbados. Rates begin at \$794 pp double, Add air (available March 2025) and optional insurance. Deep discount, rates won't last.

Bali To Bangkok

March 10 - 22, 2026

Sail the elegant Viking Venus from Bali to Java (including Surabaya, Semarang and Jakarta). Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Bangkok. Rates begin at \$5,374.00 pp dbl and include wine, beer, soda at lunch and dinner, comp excursion in each port, wifi, and speciality restaurant visit. Add air, insurance and pre/post hotels.

Contact 732-786-0314 or ggoldstein@csa-nyc.org for details.

REAL ID (Really!) Beginning May 7, anyone planning to travel domestically will need a REAL ID or a valid passport. No longer is a regular driver's license able to be used for domestic air travel. The best way to request a REAL ID license is to contact your local Motor Vehicle Bureau to secure an appointment. You are urged to do this as soon as possible as appointments may be difficult to secure.

Executive Leadership Institute

Seminar: Efficiency Breakthroughs Abound

BY CHUCK WILBANKS

Every year, the Executive Leadership Institute hosts a two-day seminar entitled Breakthrough Coaching. This year's training, held March 26-27, was led by education consultant and former principal Dr. Cordell Jones, and covered a wide range of strategies to make a school leader's work life more effective. The first day was attended only by principals; on the second day, secretaries joined their principals. Mr. Jones covered a wide range of topics ranging from scheduling to time management to office organization.

Melissa de Leon, principal of International High School at Lafayette in Brooklyn, is in her second year as a principal, and has been working for seven months with her secretary, Alison Kearney, a school secretary veteran of 17 years. Both spoke highly of the training.

"This has been transformational," said Ms. de Leon. "It's like an early intervention. It has allowed us to solidify our working relationship. I feel empowered so I can support everyone

in the school. I'm walking away with concrete strategies to make an impact over the next 12 months. I feel like this PD should be mandatory for every school leader."

As for Ms. Kearney, she sees ways to get more done and help the school run efficiently. "I'm looking forward to having more duties delegated to me, and helping manage Melissa's schedule better."

This year also drew paying attendees from around the country, and the globe. Principals from Utah and Arizona came, as did Principal Angela Main and Secretary Stacey Prole, from the Tokoroa North School in Tokoroa, in New Zealand's North Island. She was able to make the trip as a paying customer after her labor union negotiated a fund to improve the well-being of administrators. She noted that the fund received a lot of unfair criticism in local media, but her use of the money on this project was well worth it to her school community. "This has been brilliant," she said. "It's just what we needed."



■ Top: New Zealand Principal Angela Main, right, and secretary Stacey Prole. Bottom: Brooklyn Principal Melissa de Leon (right) and her secretary, Alison Kearney (left) called the training 'transformational.'

In Memoriam



Alfa Anderson

ALFA ANDERSON, 78, died Dec. 17, 2024. She was a resident of Brooklyn. Ms. Anderson, who enjoyed a career with the NYC Department of Education as a teacher and administrator, was also an acclaimed musician and singer best known for her performances with Chic, a popular disco-era band, and Luther Vandross. Ms. Anderson was born in Augusta, GA, in September of 1946, the oldest of four children of Alonso and Essie Anderson. She graduated from Lucy C. Laney High School where she told the Daily News of New York in 2004 that she played saxophone, flute and piccolo. She earned a degree from Paine College in Augusta, before moving to New York City where she earned a master's degree from Teachers College at Columbia University. In addition to singing "for the pure joy" as a child in her home, church and school, Ms. Anderson told the Daily News that she sang in the choir at both Paine and Columbia. According to her professional biography, she made her professional debut in Cannonball Adderley's "Big Man" (1976), which premiered at Carnegie Hall. She also starred in Lincoln Center's production of "Children of the Fire." She began teaching even as she was doing background vocals



Lucille Vecchiarelli

for "The Wiz" soundtrack (1978) and other artists, among them Ray Barretto, Odyssey, Major Harris and Roy Buchanan. In 1977, Luther Vandross had introduced her to Niles Rodgers and his writing partner Bernard Edwards, leading members of the newly formed band, Chic. Ms. Anderson sang backing vocals on one of Chic's first singles for Atlantic Records, "Everybody Dance," in 1977. She also performed on the band's debut album. She was teaching at Hunter College when she went on her first tour with Chic in 1978, where she was promoted to lead vocalist, a role she shared with Luci Martin through 1983. Among Chic's most well-known songs are "Le Freak" and "I Want Your Love." "Le Freak" was one of the biggest-selling singles in Atlantic Records history for more than 30 years; the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2015. The band broke up in 1983, but Mss. Anderson continued her career in the '80s with a variety of solo artists, among them Mick Jagger, Gregory Hines, Sister Sledge, Teddy Pendergrass, Jennifer Holliday and Sheena Easton. She toured with Vandross from 1982 to 1987. Ms. Anderson married Elurriel "Tinkr" Barfield, the bass player in Vandross's band, on Sept.

13, 1987. According to PopMatters, Ms. Anderson became a mother to his two sons and returned to school to get a master's degree in educational leadership from Bank Street College of Education. Ms. Anderson returned to the classroom, while also continuing to perform with her husband, Luci Martin, and another Chic vocalist, Norma Jean Wright. She worked as a teacher for the DOE until Aug. 30, 2000. She was appointed an assistant principal the next day, on Aug. 31. A few months later, on Feb. 1, 2001, Ms. Anderson was named principal of El Puente Academy for Peace & Justice, in Brooklyn, a post she held until June 30, 2005. From July 1, 2005 through Jan. 1, 2009, she served as a supervisor in the DOE's Division of Student Support in Queens, when she retired. In 2017, she released her first full-length solo album, "Music From My Heart," which includes a tribute track to Vandross. She and her husband had also teamed up to release "Messages" and "Daily Bread" in 1999 and 2002, respectively. According to people.com, staff and students of El Puente Academy of Peace & Justice, wrote a message on Instagram upon hearing of Ms. Anderson's death: "During her tenure, Alfa inspired and transformed the lives of our young people and community with her profound grace, wisdom, artistry and indomitable spirit. We thank you, dear Alfa, and may you continue to dance with the angels with eternal peace and power." Information about survivors was not available.

LUCILLE SUSAN VECCHIARELLI, 83, died Feb. 14. She lived in Howell, NJ. Mrs. Vecchiarelli was born in Brooklyn. She attended Hunter College where she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She earned a master's degree in elementary education from Brooklyn College. She began her career as a teacher of first grade, but moved on primarily to teach fourth grade. After working in the classroom for many years, Mrs. Vecchiarelli became a reading specialist. She earned her supervisor's license

and was named an assistant principal at PS 181, a position she held for more than a dozen years, before retiring in the late 1990s. Ms. Vecchiarelli went on to work in the Chancellor's District where she was part of a team working to improve some of NYC's poorest performing school districts. In 1973, she and her family moved to the New Springville community of Staten Island. Mrs. Vecchiarelli joined the Executive Leadership Institute, and served as borough coordinator for Staten Island where she was responsible for the training and professional development of newly appointed APs. Having moved to New Jersey in 2001 after 30 years on Staten Island, Mrs. Vecchiarelli was then elected to the Executive and Advisory Boards of the CSA Retiree Chapter. She also was the leader of the CSA-Central New Jersey Regional Unit. In addition to their home in New Jersey, she and her husband maintained a home on Martha's Vineyard. "They loved sitting on the beach and reading or being with family and friends. My mom and my dad loved to host family and friends, show them the various beaches and lovely towns that make up the island," wrote Mrs. Vecchiarelli's daughter, Maria Derasmo. "They loved sitting on their porch at the end of the day." While a high-school student, Mrs. Vecchiarelli met her husband-to-be, who attended St. John's University, at a Valentine's Day Dance at the school in Manhattan. Mrs. Vecchiarelli was predeceased by her husband of 57 years, Dominick Vecchiarelli, as well as her three siblings, Mickie Levy, Theresa Carvelli and Thomas Shand. She is survived by her daughter Maria Derasmo (husband, Jim) and her son, John Vecchiarelli, as well as four grandchildren, Brett, Susan, Victoria and John. "Lucille was the matriarch and the rock of her family," her family wrote.

Send obituary notices to the CSA News Editor Chuck Wilbanks at chuck@csa-nyc.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS (MORE ON P.12)

First Aerial Drone Competition Flies High

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

The Health, Art, Robotics and Technology (H.A.R.T.) High School in Cambria Heights, Queens hosted the first Aerial Drone Competition in New York State history. On March 1, students from schools across New York City competed at a high level. Multiple news outlets, including Fox5 and PIX11, covered the event, which was attended by officials from the office of Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos, Queens South High Schools Superintendent Dr. Josephine Yeboah Van-Ess, and Assemblyman Clyde Vanel.

The Aerial Drone Competition tests the coding skills, operation, speed and efficiency of students to complete specific drone-based missions.



■ Happy drone competitors at Health, Art, Robotics and Technology High School. Right, Principal Kayode Ayetiwa, Queens South High Schools Superintendent Dr. Josephine Yeboah Van-Ess, and Assemblyman Clyde Vanel.

"The students exhibited a great level of competitive excitement and engagement," said Principal Kayode Ayetiwa. "Assistant Principal Anna Raghubir was

instrumental in ensuring the event met all of the regulations of the Robotics Education Competition Foundation." Two schools won the compe-

tion and will be attending the Regionals: Health Arts, Robotics and Technology High School and Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School.

"We look forward to making this an annual event at HART's high school and enlisting more schools to join," said Principal Ayetiwa.



Courage Award

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

Wagner College Holocaust Center Advisory Board presented its Courage Award to Staten Island Principals Ken and Christine Zapata at the annual Community Mitzvah Awards Dinner on March 20.

Mrs. Zapata, is principal of PS 29 Bardwell, and Mr. Zapata is principal of Frank D. Paulo Intermediate School.

The board noted that while she was a District 31 Education Administrator specializing in social studies and technology, she collaborated with the Staten Island Advance/silive.com and Shira Stoll to promote "Where Life Leads You," a poignant NY-Emmy winning collection of local Holocaust survivor stories, ensuring these lessons resonate with future generations.

Mr. Zapata, also a member of the District 31 Equity, Empathy, and Excellence Team and the Equity Alliance of Staten Island, accompanied 250 of his IS75 students to attend the Egon J. Salmon Commemoration of Kristallnacht and the St. Louis at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, organized by the WCHC. The panel also pointed out that her students were among the first visitors when the Wagner College Holocaust Center opened.

"Together, Christine and Ken are committed to advancing educational practices that benefit all learners," the group said. "This year, they are honored to receive the 2025 Courage Award from Wagner College for their extraordinary contributions to Holocaust education and their unwavering dedication to their schools and community." Mr. and Mrs. Zapata serve as executive board members of CSA.

Honoring A Library Pioneer

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

Melissa Jacobs, Director of Library Services for the New York City Public Schools, received the 2025 American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) Intellectual Freedom Award.

"The sheer magnitude of a district serving over one million students and garnering essential partners within the district for policy agreement is impressive," said the AASL's committee chair Jennifer Balke. "The committee was particularly struck by Jacobs' conviction that 'denying children access to school libraries is one of the greatest forms of censorship.'"

The AASL cited Ms. Jacobs' establishment of a Citywide Digital Library, ensuring students can access resources regardless of location, a legacy that will endure. "Her proactive approach, strengthening policies and processes while championing the Teacher2Librarian program, ensures a future with more qualified school librarians dedicated to protecting intellectual freedom."

Over her long career, Ms. Jacobs has worked hard to promote the Public Schools Collection Development Policy and Citywide Digital Library to administrators and teachers across the city. She has delivered training, hosted webinars, and facilitated in-person workshops. "These initiatives help educators understand the importance of equitable access, intellectual freedom, and how to effectively defend against challenges," she said.

Cordelia Veve, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction, Division of School Leadership, called Ms. Jacobs a thought leader in librarianship.

"Melissa has provided invaluable resources that support the free exchange of ideas, helping to foster



■ A recent ceremony celebrated the library expansion at Scholars Academy, thanks in part to the work of Director of the Office of Library Services and CSA member Melissa Jacobs. From left: Deputy Chancellor Dr. Danika Rux; Ms. Jacobs, Director of Office of Library Services; Michele Smyth, Principal, Scholars' Academy; Melissa Compton, Acting Superintendent, District 27; Dr. Miatheresa Pate, Chief Academic Officer, NYCPS.

intellectual curiosity and growth in students of all backgrounds," Ms. Veve said. "Melissa is deeply involved in fostering a culture of collaboration among educators, librarians, and policymakers to ensure that the principles of intellectual freedom are upheld in both public and private educational institutions. She has been a mentor to countless educators and aspiring school librarians, supporting them in navigating the complexities of intellectual freedom while fostering a love of learning and critical engagement with the world around them."

The AASL award winners will be recognized during the 2025 AASL National Conference taking place October 16-19 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Not long before receiving the award, Ms. Jacobs attended a grand "re-opening" ceremony for the addi-

tion of a new library space at Scholars' Academy in Queens. The improvements were courtesy of the VITAL Libraries Grant--the brainchild of Ms. Jacobs -- funded by the Edith and Frances Mulhall Achilles Memorial Fund and the Fund for Public Schools. VITAL stands for "Vital Instructional Transformative Accessible Learning."

On March 21, the DOE announced two more schools would receive a VITAL Libraries grant: Edward R. Reynolds West Side High School and P.S. 45Q The Clarence Witherspoon School. The schools were chosen from 136 applicants to receive \$50,000 each to transform their library programs and form Library Advisory Committees. In addition to the winners, two finalists will receive \$1,000 each to support their existing library programs.

NYC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

Great Schools, Great Principals

BY SUSAN RIPPE HOFMANN

The NYC Elementary School Principals Association hosted its 92nd Annual Convention at the Brooklyn Marriott on March 8, bringing together educational leaders to celebrate and empower the vital work of principals in today's challenging educational landscape. There was a capacity crowd of principals, teachers and parent leaders as well as a host of city and state educational officials.

The convention featured a keynote address by Houston Kraft, co-founder of CharacterStrong, an organization dedicated to teaching character and social-emotional skills in schools worldwide. Kraft, who has spoken at over 700 events internationally, shared insights from his books "Deep Kindness" and "Be Kind,"



■ NYCESPA Executive Director Emeritus Pierre Lehmuller accepting the first NYCESPA Lifetime Achievement Award, which is named for him, and recognizes his 30 plus years of service to NYCESPA.

emphasizing the importance of empathy and kindness in education.

Attendees participated in various professional development sessions, including several which

were led by principals in current practice, networked with peers, and engaged with exhibitors showcasing products and services aimed at enhancing student success. The convention culminated in a gala luncheon honoring principals celebrating 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25-year milestones in their careers.

NYCESPA presented former CSA Executive Vice President Rosemarie Sinclair with its Norm Sherman Friend of Education Award, recognizing her advocacy for principals. Rosie's work was instrumental in elevating the leaders of PreK programs to principalships. District 11 Deputy Superintendent Tiawana Perez received the Ed Averill Leadership in Education Award. Deputy Superintendent Perez served as a NYCESPA delegate for several years before moving into the district leadership role.

NYCESPA also presented

Executive Director Emeritus Pierre Lehmuller with the first NYCESPA Lifetime Achievement Award, which is named for him, and recognizes his 30 plus years of service to NYCESPA.

NYCESPA's mission is to advocate for and support New York City's elementary-level principals and educational leaders, highlighting elementary education as the foundation for all future academic achievement.

The association continues to provide professional learning opportunities throughout the year, with upcoming sessions scheduled across the five boroughs, further reinforcing its dedication to empowering educational leaders in their commitment to all children.

Susan Rippe Hofmann is CSA conference chair and NYCESPA executive director.

NATION
Education

VIRGINIA

Summer Learning

According to the National Summer Learning Association and The School Superintendents' Association, some 75 percent of superintendents believe that the most important benefit of summer programming is honing students' academic skills. Now, 8 in 10 districts reportedly plan to maintain or increase summer learning this year, despite the expiration of federal COVID-19 emergency funding. (K-12 Drive)

CONNECTICUT

SPED Changes

Special education transitional education programs could be shortened if proposed legislation passes. Currently, students receive services through the end of the school year in the year that they turn 22. New legislation seeks to end transition services at a student's 22nd birthday. Transition programs support students who qualify in obtaining a variety of life skills including navigating transportation and job training. (ctmirror.org)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Free Education

At least five states have proposed actions that would "limit undocumented students' access to a free, public education." A 1982 Supreme Court ruling grants undocumented students rights to a free, public education. As a result, schools don't request immigration status. However, The Heritage Foundation reportedly published a brief recommending that states now collect that data, with the goal of passing legislation that would allow public schools to charge tuition from undocumented families. (edweek.org)

CALIFORNIA

Federal Cuts

Gutting of the Department of Education could have severe consequences on special needs students, according to the president of the California Federation of Teachers, citing that the cuts are not in isolation but in conjunction with proposals to reduce Title I and Medicaid which support low-income students. The union is working with The American Federation of Teachers to file lawsuits. (Patch.com)

— COMPILED BY
CHRISTINE ALTMAN

Rules Of The Road | Chris Ogno

Injured At Work? Follow These Rules



If You Are Injured In The Line Of Duty, Notify Your CSA Field Director Right Away

We often believe that we will never encounter a workplace injury.

Unfortunately, that may not be true. And should you fail to follow the proper procedures, you may not be granted "injury in the line of duty" status. This month's column outlines the Department of Education's Policy and Procedures on Line of Duty Injuries for Pedagogical Employees. Approved leave for injury in the line of duty is granted with pay and without charge to sick leave provided:

1. The immediate supervisor or designee has been notified of the accident or incident;
2. The injured employee has submitted an application for injury in the line of duty leave (OP 198);
3. The immediate supervisor or designee has determined that the causative accident or injury occurred in the line of duty;
4. All medical documentation requested by the Medical Bureau is received;
5. The Medical Bureau has determined that unfitness for duty was the direct result of the causative accident or incident. Requests for leaves due to injury in the line of duty that are for ten days or less (excluding the day of the incident) may be approved by the immediate supervisor upon receipt of the documentation set forth above, including a note signed by a physician. The ten days that can be approved by the superintendent do not have to be consecutive days.

Requests for leaves due to injury in the line of duty that are for ten days or less (excluding the day of the incident) may be approved by the superintendent upon receipt

of the documentation set forth above, including a note signed by a physician. The ten days that can be approved by the superintendent do not have to be consecutive days.

The injured supervisor must:

1. Report the accident or incident within twenty-four hours after the occurrence, unless reasonable grounds exist for failure to report within these time limits;
2. OORS website will generate the following documents; a Comprehensive Injury Report (CIR) fact sheet and witness statements (which need to be filled out by the employee and any witnesses and uploaded to OORS). Please note: The CIR requires signatures from the employee, supervisor and superintendent, as well as an administrative determination of approval/denial by the superintendent.
3. Submit an Application for Excuse of Absence (OP198) when claiming absences as a result of the injury along with any supporting medical documentation;
4. All documents (the CIR, the OP198 and any supporting medical documentation) must be uploaded into HR Connect Web Portal using your DOE email credentials;
5. If the injured employee anticipates that the absence will exceed ten working days, please contact CSA.

Remember, you can't leave anything to chance, expecting that the system will take care of you. You will even have to prove that you were in fact on duty. Here's the city's definition:

1. The supervisor has officially reported to work;
2. The supervisor is on school property during lunch period or

immediately before or after officially reporting to or from work. (School property is considered to be the school itself, the surrounding area including the playground fields and/or play areas, the sidewalk outside the school, and the school parking lot);

3. The employee is not on school property but has the approval to work at another site or at an out-of-school assignment such as coaching or field trips;

4. The employee is traveling outside the school pursuant to explicit instructions from a supervisor (e.g. transporting payroll material, or is directly en route to or from a meeting or conference);

5. The employee has an assignment, which requires travel and is injured while performing duties connected with this assignment.

Supervisors who have been granted line of duty status by the Medical Bureau, may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket medical expenses, which are the result of the approved injury in the line of duty. Only expenses that are not covered by other payments or insurance will be considered. The current reimbursement level of \$750 is waived if the injury resulted from an assault by a student, parent or intruder. Leaving your home's geographic area during injury in the line of duty leave is prohibited without the approval of the Medical Bureau. If you are injured in the line of duty, notify your CSA field director immediately. For further questions or concerns, contact CSA – we are here to guide and support you.

Chris Ogno is Director of Member Services.

RETIREE Chapter

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Gayle Lockett

We Must Stay Active



March was a month filled with many activities, but the event that really stands out was Albany advocacy day. Once again, 25 in-service members and 25 retirees participated in this eventful day that was well-planned by the CSA Director of Political Affairs Mabel Sarduy and her team, along with Retiree Chapter Director Mark Brodsky.

The positive relationships CSA team members had with the elected officials was quite evident. We discussed a range of important issues, such as raising the cost-of-living adjustments for retirees; more funds for school leaders' professional development through the Educational Leadership Institute; and the need to recalibrate the education budget based on factors such as special education needs and poverty in New York City. We advocated investing more in career and technical education. Kudos to all our CSA members who participated!

...

Being involved politically is more important than ever. CSA is already screening candidates for key city races, from the mayoralty to City Council, to borough presidents and others. CSA screens candidates, regardless of their political party, who reach out to or request CSA's backing. Each candidate is assessed by the screeners and CSA President Henry Rubio brings top candidates to CSA's executive board for a vote.

It's crucial that every retiree contributes to the Political Action Committee to protect our interests, especially our earned benefits and pensions. With today's national political climate, we must be extra vigilant. If you are not a PAC contributor, or would like to increase your contribution, contact either the Retiree Chapter or your unit leader for how to join and receive the PAC membership card. The cost to join the Presidents' Club is just \$8 a month or you can pay \$96 once a year.

...

We will celebrate the Retiree Chapter's 20th anniversary on May 18, at the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. Thanks to the Special Events Committee chaired by John Oricchio, the second Vice Chair of the Retiree Chapter and his committee members. There is still time to sign up for this wonderful celebration. To register, please go to the CSA website.

The Retiree Chapter has come a long way in its development, growth and expansion, with more improvements in benefits and services to come. Thank you, former CSA President Jill Levy and former CSA Welfare Fund Director and first Retiree Chapter President Irwin Shanes, who worked diligently to create and form the CSA Retiree Chapter. We are looking forward to celebrating this momentous occasion. For those who are not able to attend, smile during the time of the celebration and perhaps raise a glass to the Retiree Chapter's accomplishments.

In Unity,

Gayle Lockett

RC Cultural, Educational 2025 Program Update

Trips

4/22 Tour of the Intrepid Museum, 11:00, \$32
 4/24 Hispanic Society Museum - closed 12:00, \$10
 5/4 New York Bateaux Brunch Cruise - closed 12:00, \$135
 5/12 Tour & High Tea at Gracie Mansion - closed 11:00, \$75
 5/19 Tour & High Tea at Gracie Mansion - closed 11:00, \$75
 5/28 Green-Wood Cemetery, 1:00, \$20
 5/30 Wine Seminar at CSA, 5:00, \$55
Fee for guests: Add an additional \$5 for each trip

Clubs

Book & Bagels: Virtual - \$20 Wed. 10:30, 5/21, 6/10, 7/23
Dining Club: at a restaurant. TBD
Theater Club: matinee; orchestra seats, 2:00 pm Gypsy, Wed 5/7/25, Fee: \$149

Virtual Presentations

4/29 **Nutrition and Sugar Consumption, Time: 1:00 - 2:30, Fee: \$15:** Nutritionist Valerie Werter Green will discuss the following topics: Interpreting nutrition labels for better choices; Healthy substitutes for high-carb or sugary foods; Recommendations for vitamins or supplements, if needed.

Classes

Acrylic & Watercolor Painting - Virtual 1:30 \$80
Fee for guests: Add an additional \$5 for each trip

Other events

Wellness & Wellbeing Classes for Retirees with Denise Schira
 Time: Mondays, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm by Zoom
 Spring Series: 4/7, 4/21, 4/28; 5/5, 5/12, 5/19
 Fee: \$90 for the full series (\$120 non-members)
 All abilities, ages, body types, genders, and cultures are welcomed to these inclusive guided sessions focusing on mental and physical wellness and emotional wellbeing; incorporating breathing techniques, mindfulness practices, simple chair yoga, and gentle somatic movement with uplifting music and fun dance exercises; and adaptable for aged populations and those with health challenges and limited mobility and range of motion. Register online with Cvent for CSARC. Contact Deniseschira@gmail.com; Lucie@csa-nyc.org.

5/18 **Retiree Chapter's 20th Anniversary at the Metropolitan Opera House, Fee: TBD**
 6/9 - 6/11 **Mohonk Mountain House - Mark Brodsky- see RC Update emailed to you on January 17, 2025.**
 6/27 - **The Yankees - Mark Brodsky - see RC Update emailed to you on January 17, 2025**

Register online at the CSA website. Pay by check or credit card. Cancellation Policy: Refunds only issued if we can fill your slot from a waiting list, no exceptions. Cancellations must be in writing or by email to Lucie @ csa-nyc.org. Call the Retiree Chapter Office at (212) 823-2075 if you have questions.

Trip Through Time



Tenement Museum Outing

■ **At the Tenement Museum: CSA Retirees** Elizabeth Collins, Ellen Fleishman, Stephen Koch, Demetra Ingram, Mitchel Levine, Patricia Mack, Ana Maldonado, Patricia Mamara, Raine Semaj, and Rosemary Sinclair explored the story of Joseph and Rachel Moore, Black New Yorkers who made their home in Lower Manhattan in the 1860's through the 1870's. Retirees visited their apartment and learned about how they lived.

HAZEL DUKES

Tribute To Mentor, Activist, And Friend

BY GEORGE YOUNG

It pains me to share this picture as a tribute to my great friend, mentor, and activist, Hazel Dukes. Hazel, the former NAACP New York State Conference president, was an outstanding woman who dedicated her life to improving conditions for all human beings, regardless of their background or ethnic group. She helped shape me as a human being and as a man who understands that we are all here to improve conditions for everyone, especially our children.

Hazel was a great friend to all schools in New York City, particularly those in the Harlem community. She had a special connection to PS 46, where I served as principal for 21 years.

At the same time, it brings me great joy to share this picture because it also

features another remarkable educator, Trudy Erwin, former principal of PS 181 in District 17, and the first executive director of the Executive Leadership Institute. The lesson here is that we often don't have as much time as we think we do. Recently, Trudy and I had been discussing our plans to meet with Hazel for lunch, and one day, we decided to drop everything in our schedules and go see her. It was a truly wonderful day. As you can see, we were all filled with joy, grateful for the opportunity to spend quality time together.

Rest in peace, my great friend, mentor, and humanitarian, Hazel Dukes. I love you, and I miss you.

George Young, retired principal of PS 46 in Manhattan, is the leader of the CSA RC's Manhattan Unit.



■ An annual lunch: Retired Principal and former ELI Director Trudy Erwin, Retired Principal and Manhattan Unit Leader George Young, and Civil Rights leader Hazel Dukes. "Hazel was a great friend to all schools," Mr. Young said.

RC Regional Units

BRONX

Our virtual spring general membership meeting was well-received. Guest speaker Valerie Werner-Green, a registered dietitian affiliated with Montefiore Medical Center, delivered an insightful presentation on health and nutrition, with a focus on the impact of ultra-processed foods. Ms. Werner-Green discussed the correlation between processed food consumption and increased risks of anxiety, depression, cancer (including colorectal cancer in men), cardiovascular mortality, and obesity. Participants showed intense interest and there was a vibrant and extensive question-and-answer session. CSA First Vice-President Stamo K. Rosenberg also addressed the meeting, highlighting the alignment of NYC school nutritional guidelines with Department of Education standards to meet student needs. Our end-of-year celebration is scheduled for June 25, at the Lobster House in City Island. Further details regarding this event and other upcoming member activities will be included in the forthcoming Bronx Unit Newsletter.

—SHARON D. THOMPSON

SUNCOAST

Warm Sarasota greetings to everyone. On March 26, RC Director Mark Brodsky joined our luncheon along with Greg Kaiser, a Sarasota Estate planning and elder law attorney. The lunch was delicious, and our guests were most informative. Final plans are being made for our next outing in St. Pete, at the Imagine Museum, with optional dinner at Gratzzi Italian Grill. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me directly by phone or email. If you decide to retire here in paradise, anywhere on the west coast from Naples up to Tarpon Springs, do not hesitate to reach out and join our Suncoast Retiree Unit. You can reach me at cindysal6687@gmail.com, or (646) 387-2652. Until then, stay safe and keep having fun in your retirement!

— CINDY SALOMONE

SOUTHWEST

The temps in Arizona are starting to warm up. That's a good reminder to stay hydrated. Wishing all who celebrate, a happy Easter and Passover. Please SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, May 13, for our annual in-person meeting. It will be held at the beautiful Oakwood Country Club in Sun Lakes. Our guest speaker, Nancy Juarez from the Arizona Attorney General's office, will discuss scams aimed at seniors and how to protect against fraud. Details will be emailed, and we hope that you can attend. Feel free to send questions or concerns to sthier8@gmail.com.

— STEF THIER

LONG ISLAND

Members had the opportunity to participate in a docent led tour entitled, "Deco at 100," at the Nassau County Museum of Art. The exhibit conveyed the Art Deco Spirit and was very illuminating. Now that spring is upon us, our walking club has resumed meeting weekly (weather permitting) at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow. This walking club is a great way for members to connect with friends while moving at their own pace. Continue to check our website csaliretires.com for all future presentations and trips.

—KARLA LANDESMAN MARRERO

SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

Members enjoyed several events this month. We held a very successful Health Fair organized by Norman Sherman. I want to thank those members who helped with the event. A group of members attended the DaVinci Immersive Art Experience run by Eleanor Pessa, our event planner. All had a wonderful time. On March 28, 2025, we will hold our annual general meeting and luncheon with Mark Brodsky, Gayle Lockett and Steve Kramer, Esq. as our special guest from New York. Enjoy the upcoming holidays.

— LOIS TURETZKY

MID-ATLANTIC

Mark your calendars for our next unit meetings: Unit 'Zoom meeting' will be Tue., April 8. Guest speaker Monique Providence, from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) will discuss our pension, TDA, and other TRS benefits available to us. The next 'in-person event' will be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from Wed., June 4 – Fri., June 6. Our general meeting will be Thur., June 5, at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse. Our in-person special guest speakers will be: Steve Kramer from Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C., Gayle Lockett, our CSARC chair, and Mark Brodsky, our CSARC director, and other surprise guests. All these upcoming meetings will provide important information regarding retirement benefits, retirement legal services, and retirement updates. Several current and pending CSA retirement issues will also be addressed. While we are in Philadelphia, Meet-Greet-Tour-Eat activities have been planned for our enjoyment. Your attendance is highly encouraged! More details, including Zoom links and venue information, will be shared as we get closer to the dates. If you are not yet a member, now is a perfect time to join and stay informed on all up-to-date information coming from our central CSA office, CSARC office, and your Mid-Atlantic CSARC unit. For further information, contact our unit leader, Rajinder Kaur, rkcsa11@gmail.com or (516) 343-9328.

—DEBRA BROWN

GEORGIA

The Unit had a festive holiday luncheon in December enjoyed by members and guests. Our Annual Spring Membership Meeting will be May 6 at the Historic Green Manor in Union City, Georgia. Cost is \$25. Our book club will have a zoom discussion on *Harlem Rhapsody* by Victoria Christopher Murray on Friday, April 11. For information about upcoming events contact Georgia Harrison at rossmis2@aol.com.

—GEORGIA HARRISON

MANHATTAN

The general meeting of the Manhattan Unit will be on Friday, April 4, 2025, 12:30 P.M. in the Little Theater at the Julia Richman Education Complex, at 317 East 67th Street. Our speaker will be Laura Klein, director of health at the Advocates for Older People. Membership dues of \$15 for the year May 2025-April 2026 will be collected at the meeting. Checks are to be made out to Manhattan Unit CSARC. If you do not pay your dues at the meeting, a flyer will be sent out at a later date detailing how and to whom checks are to be sent. On May 7, at 10:45 am, members of the Manhattan Unit will visit the iconic Apollo Theater (253 West 125 Street). The tour will be led by Billy "Mr. Apollo" Mitchell. The trip is limited to 20 people. The cost is \$15 (lunch is not included, but there are a number of restaurants in the area). Checks should be made out to Manhattan Unit CSARC and mailed to Suzanne Muller, 4 Stuyvesant Oval, Apt. 12A, NYC 10009. Suzanne can be reached at (917) 330-2405. Checks must be received by April 16. A flyer will be mailed with more details.

— GEORGE YOUNG AND
GAIL LYNNE GREEN

QUEENS

On Wednesday, April 23, we'll hold our annual general membership meeting at The Inn at New Hyde Park. Our guest speakers will be CSA First Vice President Stamo K. Rosenberg, and Thomas P. DiNapoli, New York State Comptroller. Admission is free for paid 2025 Queens Unit members. A small buffet will be available upon arrival. As always, there is free valet parking. Please see the flier recently sent to you by email for all the details. It's also available on our website: www.csaqueens.org. Meanwhile, it's time to renew your annual membership: Our membership year runs Jan. 1 – Dec. 31. You can download the renewal form also from our website: www.csaqueens.org. Check it periodically to see upcoming events and information throughout the year. Be well and stay safe!

—LEONARD B. STERMAN



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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS (MORE ON P.8)

Hip Hop Legend And A Broadway Debut

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

The Theatre Arts Production Company School in the Bronx had a VIP visitor on March 14, when Hip Hop legend Wyclef Jean performed music, offered advice to students, and presented the school community with important gifts.

“He spoke, he played music, and gave us over \$3,500 in musical instruments,” said Principal Ron Link. “Afterwards, he did cartwheels and walked backwards on his hands with and for the kids. He’s a true humanitarian and incredible inspiration and role model for our young artists. He stayed for a full hour afterwards. And the kids are so great: No one asked for an autograph. They all had questions about music. They were thirsty for his wisdom.”

Mr. Link noted that the music Mr. Jean helped pioneer, now long ago, appears



■ Hip Hop Pioneer Wyclef Jean, right, performed and spoke with students at Theatre Arts Production Company School in the Bronx. Students also performed for him, and showed their stuff on Broadway, above, as well.



to remain relevant long after he first performed it. So when Mr. Jean sang “Hips Don’t Lie,” the song he performed with Columbian star Shakira, students were singing along with the refrain “Shakira Shakira. “These are 14–18-year-olds,” Mr. Link said, noting that the song was released 20 years ago.

The visit was kept mostly

under wraps beforehand, so as not to inundate the school with a curious public. But the visit was a big deal, Mr. Link noted, and it was covered on ABC World News and Good Morning America.

“It was a superb day,” he said.

Mr. Link, who had previous careers as a firefighter and actor, is a passionate booster of

his school’s arts program. He proudly notes that students made their Broadway debut with a performance of ‘In The Heights’ at the 2025 Shubert Foundation High School Theatre Festival for NYC Public Schools. The prestigious annual event, presented by The Shubert Foundation and the NYC Department of Education Arts

Office, was held March 24. Mr. Link’s school was one of only five entrants from around the city chosen to perform. The festival celebrates the most outstanding high school productions of the year, chosen by professional theatre artists and educators.

“The arts and academics are flourishing at our school,” Mr. Link said.

Grounding Students For A ‘Success Mindset’

BY CSA NEWS STAFF

In February, ABC News profiled Fatimah Ali, who leads the Young Adult Borough Center’s Roosevelt campus in the Bronx, highlighting her work helping students excel and transform their lives.

In addition to her 17 years of leadership experience in NYC schools, Ms. Ali is trained in yoga, Reiki, meditation, and positive psychology. Her understanding of how wellness impacts physical, mental and emotional growth led her to integrate these practices into

curriculum and professional development, helping her students and faculty build self-awareness and find balance in their personal and professional lives.

A typical school day, the segment noted, “begins on a yoga mat.”

“A lot of students come from different places, they’re getting on buses, they’re getting on subways, they’re outside, it’s noisy, it’s cold, and the idea is we want to transition them to being here and being present,” Ms. Ali said.

She calls the program



■ Assistant Principal Fatimah Ali leading a yoga and mindfulness session to start the evening’s classes. “We want them to wake up to who they really are.”

“Success Mindset,” and one key aim is to help her students set clear goals and develop a vision for their future. The students interviewed in the ABC News segment shared how these practices helped them feel more supported and clearer about their next steps.

“We’re not telling them what to do, we’re asking them questions that get them to reflect on what it is they want to do, and who they want to be,” she said. “The idea is they wake up to who they truly are. They feel good about themselves, and we are empowering them.”