

## NYSUT Webinar Series: Speaker Bios

**Jolene T. DiBrango** serves as Executive Vice President for the New York State United Teachers where she leads the union's advocacy with the New York State Board of Regents and State Education Department. She oversees NYSUT's Research and Educational Services Department and the union's professional development arm, the Education & Learning Trust, and also leads and facilitates NYSUT's Women's Committee. A longtime middle school teacher, DiBrango is dedicated to finding solutions to the teacher shortage and teacher diversity challenges facing our schools today. She has recently spearheaded NYSUT's Take a Look at Teaching campaign, a union-led initiative to increase the number of students and career changers entering careers in teaching, improve diversity in the education workforce, and elevate the teaching profession as a whole. In addition to her work at NYSUT, DiBrango serves as a vice president and executive board member of the New York State AFL-CIO and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers.

**Kira Martelli** has been teaching for the Massapequa School District since 1995. She has taught kindergarten, first, second, fourth, and sixth grade for the district. She is currently teaching 6th grade at Berner Middle School. She teaches in both the English Language Arts Department and the Social Studies Department. Kira spent three years studying at Project Zero at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. She has designed and developed numerous 45-hour classes for her district based on the principles of Project Zero as well as, Making Thinking Visible in the Classroom, 8 Cultural Forces to Transform Our Schools, and Reclaiming Personalized Learning for NYSUT/ELT. She is an adjunct faculty member for Empire State College and Adelphi University.

**Kathleen Young**, NBCT, began teaching in NYC in 1984. After relocating to the Hudson Valley, she has taught Physical Education and Health to all grade levels. She has been teaching at Newburgh Free Academy in the Newburgh Enlarged City School District since 2005. Kathleen has been active in the NYS Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance as a member and presenter at state and local level conferences. She was part of the state-wide committee working through NYSED that developed the new NYS Phys Ed Learning Standards (2020) and currently serves on the NYED Phys Ed Content Advisory Panel. She is a Professional Learning Facilitator for candidates pursuing National Board Certification. Kathleen serves on the NYSUT Subject Area Committee for Health, Phys Ed & Family and Consumer Sciences.

**Kurt Hassenpflug**, NBCT teaches ENL and ELA grades 9-11 at Shaker High School in the North Colonie Central School District. He has been in education for twelve years, teaching in a variety of school models and grade levels. Kurt has participated in the writing and design of the NYSESLAT exams for the past several years and performs ENL and instructional technology consulting work for NYSUT ELT and CASDA. Most recently, he has authored multiple ENL and Instructional Technology Courses for NYSUT ELT.

**Susan Lafond**, a Nationally Board Certified Teacher in English as a New Language (EAYA ENL), has 20 years of combined experience teaching ENL and World Languages. As an Assistant in Educational Services with New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), she focuses on regulations and educational issues related to English learners (ELs) and ENL/Bilingual programs, as well as creating and organizing professional learning across the state needed to positively impact classroom instruction for ELs. She has served on AFT's National English Language Learner Educator Cadre since 2004, is an AFT national trainer and an expert practitioner and advisor to Colorín Colorado.