

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## General Excellence

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**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** I

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** STATIC

**Publication/Website:** STATIC

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Easy to read, good topical writing, good photos, union representatives highlighted.

**Judge 2:** STATIC is stuffed full of interesting, informative articles that paint a very colorful portrait of the activities of this committed and goal-oriented group. From the meaningful and season-appropriate cover through the editorial urging solidarity and the introduction to the new web site, this publication gives its members a wealth of useful information. My only suggestion would be to add more creative, descriptive headlines to the labels at the top of the page, and to tone down the use of color and boxes. Judicious use of these elements adds interest to the page, but too many boxes and bright colors can be jarring and confusing.

**Judge 3:** This publication packs in a lot of different kinds of information – news, features, need-to-know items and community relations activities. The cover of the holiday issue we judged had a nice Christmas theme. It may have been a little heavy on the red, but it was attractive and eye-catching. Lots of color photos, generally good sizes and some – like the photo illustrating the President's Report – are downright creative. I'm not a fan of the single-column format. I think two- or three-column format is easier to read. Headlines are generally well written. Articles are well written and generally free of typos. All in all, a nice publication.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** II

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Lynbrook Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** LTA EXAMINER

**Publication/Website:** LTA EXAMINER

**Issue Date:** January 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A good read, attractive. Regents article very interesting. Nice shout out to colleagues.

**Judge 2:** This attractive and easy-to-read publication gives members a concise overview of a number of important issues relating to education. The President's Message and the account of the meeting with Roger Tilles are clearly and persuasively written, with color and graphics used to effectively complement the text. There's not a lot of information about the activities of the local chapter, however, and headlines should be used to draw the reader into the story, rather than just act as a label.

**Judge 3:** This publication is well laid-out in a nice three-column format and generally free of typos and other errors. Lots of white space so nothing looks crowded. My biggest quibble is the lack of complete headlines. "Label heads" like those on the cover and pages 3 and 4 don't tell the reader anything. The interview with Regent Tilles, for instance, was interesting, and he had a lot to say, but you don't get that from the headline: Regent Tilles. I would have also moved the photos over into the article in columns 2 and 3. Pages have plenty of white space so nothing looks jammed in. I like the artwork on the index, and the use of art throughout.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** II

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** New Hartford Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** The Chalkboard

**Publication/Website:** The Chalkboard

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice newsletter focusing on new members. Very member-friendly.

**Judge 2:** This issue of The Chalkboard does an excellent job of introducing the district's newest teachers to members. The brief biographies are interesting and well written, choosing several facts about each person to emphasize, rather than drily reeling off dates and places of employment and education. The excellent photos are large enough to show the faces clearly, and they're cropped to minimize distracting elements in the background. As far as layout goes, the entire publication could use quite a bit more white space, and a lot fewer boxes. It's not ever a good idea to separate the headline from the story with a box.

**Judge 3:** This back-to-school issue is very well done, with profiles and photos of all new teachers. Each profile has an individual headline that someone took the time to write, and it makes a difference. The cover is attractive, but I would opt for a two- or three-column format (like the inside pages) and make the standing head on the President's Corner larger. Articles seem to be free of typos and other obvious errors, and pages have plenty of white space. Good-looking publication.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** II

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Nyack Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** The Bridge

**Publication/Website:** The Bridge

**Issue Date:** Summer 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice newsletter reflecting all school buildings and great tribute to retiring president.

**Judge 2:** The Bridge is an attractive and easy-to-read publication that gives members loads of interesting and important information. The many tributes to the retiring president are inspirational and meaningful, while the news stories paint a complete picture of the many activities of the group. The black-and-white format is attractive, but some of the photos are too small and not sharp enough. The cover, especially, would look better with fewer, but larger photos, and more white space. And using such an ornate font for the headlines makes them difficult to read.

**Judge 3:** This publication continues to improve every year, partly because its editor seems to be willing to try different things. This particular issue has a photo spread on the cover that honors the local's retiring president. The 15 photos make me wish this black-and-white publication was in color, but it's just as striking and eye-catching in b&w. The three-column layout is clean, with lots of white spaces. All articles have headlines, and the publication does not lack for photos. My only quibble is that a few columns came up a little short. Small holes like this could be filled by adding some subheads to stories, boosting the size of a photo, or having a collection of fillers on hand to choose from – VOTE-COPE promotions, the NYSUT member action center, etc. Keep up the good work.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** II

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** THE UNION SOUND

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A strong focus on Election '14 and photos of members.

**Judge 2:** The Union Sound gives its members page after page of interesting, well-written articles paired with attractive, well-chosen photos. From the persuasive, inspiring President's message on the front page to the photomontage on the last, this publication gives a clear picture of the local's activities, and the efforts of the leadership on behalf of the members. The headlines are especially good, catchy and descriptive, and the use of ragged right type makes the pages easy to read.

**Judge 3:** This black-and-white publication is not fancy. It's clean, nicely laid out, has plenty of artwork, thoughtful headlines and a lot of information that is presented attractively. It does exactly what a local union publication should do. It is generally free of typos and other errors. Photos are generally crisp, well cropped and large enough to recognize individual faces. Good, solid work.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** II

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Wallkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** IMPACT

**Publication/Website:** IMPACT

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good content. Could use some photos.

**Judge 2:** The Impact does indeed have a positive effect on its readers. The two-column, ragged right format is attractive and easy to read, while the content is well-written and informative. The cover article, although not local, gives members an excellent introduction to an extremely important current issue, while the President's message and the other articles do a good job of informing members about the activities of the local chapter. It would be nice to see some photos on the pages, and descriptive headlines would be more effective than labels in drawing readers into the stories.

**Judge 3:** Here is a publication that obviously delivers a lot of bang for the buck. It is 11 one-sided pages stapled together. But it is filled with useful information that is presented very attractively and professionally. The cover contains a low-key, attractive flag, an index and a reprint of a *NYSUT United* article on tenure. Inside is a variety of articles and brief news items dressed up with color photos and clip art. The layout is mostly two-column and clean, with lots of white space. A few typos and misspellings showed up but didn't detract from the otherwise nice appearance. This local is getting a great product for what is obviously not a huge publications budget. Congratulations.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Arlington Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** THE EDUCATOR

**Publication/Website:** THE EDUCATOR

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good newsletter about election and how dues are spent.

**Judge 2:** The Educator does an excellent job of “educating” members about a variety of important issues. The election coverage in this issue is spot on, with clear and concise descriptions of the issues and the candidates’ positions. Readers are given all the tools they need to make an intelligent choice, and the cover story lays out the reasons their vote is essential. Although the publication is attractive, more white space would make it easier to read. And the headline on page 3 – “Where does my dues money go?” is awkwardly written.

**Judge 3:** This local continues to put out an attractive and information-filled publication. I like the earth tone colors throughout. The layout is clean, open and attractive. Headlines are well-thought-out. Photos are good, and plentiful. Articles range from the bread-and-butter information pieces to some interesting features on how dues money is spent and how the Arlington district got its name. Information for upcoming elections takes up the centerspread. This is a very professional-looking publication.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Bay Shore Classroom Teachers' Association, Inc.

**Name of Entry:** The Answer

**Publication/Website:** The Answer

**Issue Date:** Spring 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Leading with member letter — great touch. Good action photos. Nice addition with Louie CK.

**Judge 2:** The Answer's passionate descriptions of the rally against Gov. Cuomo are both informative and inspirational. The pictures also do a good job of capturing the emotions of the event, although some of the other photos in the publication are of such poor quality that it's difficult to make out what they are. The large type is easy to read, but there should be more white space between the columns.

**Judge 3:** Anyone looking at the cover of this publication – with sign-carrying teachers protesting the governor under a tabloid-style headline “Taking Action” – couldn't resist turning the page to read the accompanying article. The cover screams action, and the coverage inside does not disappoint. Pictures and photos of a major rally against the governor and his education policies take up much of the issue, but it's all well-written, nicely laid out and hard to put down. The issue also contains teacher profiles and reports on scholarship fund-raising activities. Great headlines, big photos and lots of action. Not sure if all the issues are this good, but I'm guessing they are.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** The WORD

**Publication/Website:** The WORD

**Issue Date:** Feb. 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good overall newsletter speaking to all categories of members. Kudos to article with Martin Luther King and Albert Einstein photos. Top headline?

**Judge 2:** The Word is a well-designed and well-written publication that provides a wealth of important and interesting information to members. Beginning with the cover story, which gives a very complete and easy-to-understand explanation of the importance of funding for community colleges, and followed by other stories explaining the importance of union membership and a detailed description of promotion criteria, every article is excellent. The type is attractive and easy to read, and most of the photos are good. Slightly larger gutters and more white space on each page would improve the look even more.

**Judge 3:** As good as this publication is, always has been, and continues to be, the headline on the cover story of this entry trumps all of that professionalism. I simply think it's inappropriate and unnecessary to lead off this otherwise high-level, 16-page publication with the gratuitous headline: "Same \$hit, different year." AP's standard on the use of obscenities, profanities and vulgarities is: "Do not use them in stories unless they are part of direct quotations and there is a compelling reason for them." Presumably that would apply to headlines as well.

That said, the layout of this newsletter is clean and there is plenty of artwork. I would run headlines larger and avoid italics in cutlines. That much italic type is hard to read.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** The Agenda

**Publication/Website:** The Agenda

**Issue Date:** Sept/Oct 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good focus on variety of member activities.

**Judge 2:** The Agenda provides important information to its members, and it does it in a way that is not only easy to understand, but with a very personal touch. There are many names and photos of members included, and also several first-person accounts of events. For example, the attendees' recollections of the AFT conference were much more colorful and informative than the often-seen list of sessions, dinners and speeches. The layout is attractive and easy to read, although some of the group photos would be better if they were larger. Also, a uniform border on all the boxes would give a less cluttered look.

**Judge 3:** This is a nice-looking 10-page publication with a lot going for it. Like most September issues, much of it deals with new faculty and back-to-school activities. But it also contains articles on community-centered activities, ongoing educational issues, union issues and personal items. Writing is straightforward and clean, with few – if any – typos or errors. My only quibble is that the good writing and the nice layout would be enhanced with headlines that are a bit larger and more complete and more than just one or two words that don't adequately help tell the story. All in all, it's a publication to be proud of.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** SPEAK OUT

**Publication/Website:** SPEAK OUT

**Issue Date:** April/May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good basic local newsletter.

**Judge 2:** Speak Out does indeed give its members an opportunity to voice their opinions on a variety of important issues. This attractive publication with its simple, easy to read format also provides a forum for officers and executive board to describe their backgrounds and hopes for the future. The article about the late labor lobbyist, Ms. Dubrow, is interesting and inspiring, although the photo is not high enough quality to run so large. Also, more descriptive headlines would help to draw the readers into the articles.

**Judge 3:** There is very little to criticize in this publication. It's got a variety of articles, all well illustrated and nicely laid out. A photo page of a recent anti-Cuomo rally looks good on the inside back cover page. It's good to run the latest union balance sheet and the minutes of the executive board meeting, but I would shrink down the balance sheet to take up less space and dress up the board minutes with a headline that describes what you think might be the most important action at the meeting. A headline that says "The Minutes" isn't going to attract a lot of readers.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Publication/Website:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good informative regarding school board and Long Island education forums. Good member photos.

**Judge 2:** This excellent publication gives members a variety of well-written, timely articles in an attractive, easy to read format. From the cover story about boards of education to the explanation of professional capital to the excellent photo spread on the anti-Cuomo rally, Faculty Focus paints a vivid picture of the activities and interests of the local. It would be nice to see some photos on other pages, especially the cover, and a more uniform use of box and type styles would make the pages look more professional.

**Judge 3:** There is a lot of good information in this publication, but it can be hard to identify sometimes. Boxing every story (on pages 2 and 3) tends to make them all look like ads. The photo spread of the anti-Cuomo rally was good, with a great variety of photos and pictures of lots of members. I would select a general column width (2 or 3 columns) and stick with that as much as possible for news pages throughout the issue. It can help distinguish the news-type stories from the ads and notices, etc.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 01

**Class:** III

**Category:** General Excellence

**Local:** Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

**Name of Entry:** Momentum

**Publication/Website:** Momentum

**Issue Date:** Vol 35 Issue 3

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good newsletter with members voices and lots of important dates in local activity. Color helps!

**Judge 2:** This excellent and very attractive publication is packed with information that is not only important and timely, but presented in a way that is easy to understand and often entertaining to boot. The articles about the new union organizer and the first-time trip to the AFT convention really help to put a very human face on the organization. The headlines and photos are excellent, and the layout is attractive and easy to read. On the cover, however, it would have been better to use one high quality photo with several interesting faces, rather than the dark, fuzzy photos of many people.

**Judge 3:** This slick publication has a very professional look when you pick up an issue. And, that professional look follows through to the layout, the writing, the choice of articles and the artwork. Some very good headlines inside, and a wide variety of articles, including brief items about what the union has been doing, profiles of some members, and some pocketbook issues. Nice work.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

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**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** STA Helps Raise \$3,000 in 2014 Race Back to School Scholarship Event

**Publication/Website:** STATIC

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice article about good cause. The lead ties nicely into giving effort.

**Judge 2:** An excellent article about the Race Back to School scholarship event, an important activity undertaken by the local that both benefits the community and serves as a memorial to a former member. The description of the event is clear and concise, while the memories of the person who inspired them are beautifully done. The photos also help to paint a colorful picture of the day.

**Judge 3:** A nice article about the union and community joining in an annual 5K "Race Back to School" to raise money for a scholarship fund created to honor a beloved teacher who died of cancer. More than 150 runners and walkers from the union and the community worked to raise nearly \$3,000 for the scholarship, presented to a high school senior. Story provides some good background on the importance of and need for — working with the community to make a difference in students' lives.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Lynbrook Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** From the President's Desk

**Publication/Website:** LTA EXAMINER

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good job of tying together historic theme with contemporary education scene.

**Judge 2:** This is an excellent and very inspiring article about the need for solidarity and action by union members. Focusing on the Holocaust, a historical event of enormous significance, emphatically underlines the effects of apathy.

**Judge 3:** Well-written and moving article about standing up to make a difference. This is a great call to arms, but I don't see its application in a category that looks for "inspiring articles about the work your members do." This would have been well suited to the Best Column/Blog category.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Nyack Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** NTA Goes to Rally Supporting Rockland NonProfits and Contract Agencies

**Publication/Website:** The Bridge

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good article ties together supporting community organizations with school and student needs.

**Judge 2:** Members attending a rally to save funding for non-profit organizations in Rockland county is an activity that certainly benefits the wider community. And this article does an excellent job of describing not only the event, but also the importance of maintaining the funding. It's a plus that the article offers the reader ideas for future actions on this important issue.

**Judge 3:** This article outlines member involvement in a rally to protest county budget cuts to agencies that help the children, poor, the hungry, the dying and others. The author explains why and how these proposed cuts would ultimately cost more, then outlines ways for members to get involved in efforts to preserve the funding. This is a perfect example of the type of story this category is looking for.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** G-Ratified!

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good summary of negotiation process for members' understanding.

**Judge 2:** This description of the contract negotiation process is so elegant and filled with perfect metaphors that it is very close to poetry. Visualizing the process as a journey with luggage containing the necessary emotional components is a wonderful way to look at it. It could have been filled with clichés, but the language is fresh and interesting.

**Judge 3:** This article has such a clever headline and is so colorfully written I hesitate to point out that it seems better suited to the Best Column/Blog category. In describing the process of negotiating a new contract, the author writes that a good negotiation is "when there are no clear winners and losers, but a deal cut from the cloth of respectful dialogue and compromise." Some great writing.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Wallkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Building School Community Spirit and Healthy Living the Wallkill Way!

**Publication/Website:** IMPACT

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good summary of important activity.

**Judge 2:** The event described in this article, International Walk to School Day, is the very essence of union members' efforts to engage the community in a positive activity. Much more than physical exercise was accomplished in a morning that brought parents, children, teachers, businesses and community members together in such a worthwhile endeavor. The article does an excellent job of describing the event, and the pictures are a wonderful accompaniment.

**Judge 3:** This short, well-illustrated article deals well with the category's requirement for articles about engaging the community and putting solution-driven unionism to work. Here, teachers join with students and their parents for an annual International Walk to School Day, an event organized by physical education teachers to promote healthy living and exercise. Local merchants provide breakfast treats, and a bus company supplies transportation for those who need it from the school to the start of the race. Local police direct traffic along the route. Nice work.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Bay Shore Classroom Teachers' Association, Inc.

**Name of Entry:** Bay Shore teachers rally against Cuomo

**Publication/Website:** The Answer

**Issue Date:** Spring 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good job of tying local action with solidarity.

**Judge 2:** Members' participation in a rally against the governor's stand on issues of critical importance to the local is an excellent example of both union solidarity and engaging the community. The article does an excellent job of describing the events of the day, painting a vivid picture of the signs, the chanting, the actions of those attending the speech and, especially, the participation of district parents and children.

**Judge 3:** Well-written article about a massive anti-Cuomo rally on Long Island in April 2014. All the elements are here: locals from throughout downstate lining up with parents and students to show the governor and those attending a Cuomo fundraiser that parents are behind teachers in their opposition to the governor's education policies. Good photos, good headline, and the story has a good mix of local reporting and judiciously picking up useful material from Newsday and other local media. Well done.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** Blue jeans and Bangladesh

**Publication/Website:** The WORD

**Issue Date:** Feb. 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good personal piece tying in with larger social justice theme.

**Judge 2:** What an inspiring story! This article really hits home by showing how easy it is to forget in our daily lives not just past events but tragedies that are occurring every day. By tying the senseless deaths in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire to the persecution of workers in Bangladesh and other poor countries trying to unionize, the writer reminds us of the importance of supporting our own unions.

**Judge 3:** Once again, I'm looking at an article that is well written, interesting and meaningful, and wishing it had been entered in the Best Column/Blog category. It's a great topic and a great piece of writing and I praise the writer's talent and creativity. But it does not address the issues of engaging the community, putting solution-driven unionism to work or describing the inspiring work that members do.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** A STRESSFUL TIME: OBSERVATIONS, STATE TESTS, APPR, COMMON CORE..... AHHHHHH!!!!!!

**Publication/Website:** The Agenda

**Issue Date:** Winter 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Clear explanation of how to defend your rights in unfair evaluations.

**Judge 2:** This is an excellent article with plenty of concrete suggestions for members on how to prepare for and handle the stress of observations, testing and other mandated requirements in the classroom.

**Judge 3:** This is a very good primer on helping teachers deal with the stress of evaluations by knowing their rights and being prepared. Well written and researched, it puts "solution-driven unionism" to work, as per the category. One observation that doesn't affect judging in this category: I found the two-column format a little odd. I would either break the page into two columns of equal width or make it three columns.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** WE ARE A COMMUNITY

**Publication/Website:** SPEAK OUT

**Issue Date:** Winter 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good report and photos on community outreach effort.

**Judge 2:** This collection of photos, cutlines and short articles does an excellent job of illustrating the hard work of local teachers to promote worthwhile causes in the community. Although none of the events was actually a union activity, the participation of union members is beautifully documented. It would be more effective, however, to use fewer, larger and higher quality photos. Some are so small with so many tiny faces that it's hard to make out the subject.

**Judge 3:** This is a bit more photo page than article, but it captures the spirit of the category very well. Here, students and faculty organize and conduct a food drive as part of the students' community service component of the Participation in Government course. Additionally, the food is donated to a soup kitchen run by a high school science teacher. Detailed photo captions augment the brief article. A nice job, all in all.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** The Power of the Board of Education

**Publication/Website:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very clear explanation for members about why board elections matter.

**Judge 2:** An excellent, persuasive and well-written article about the importance of promoting the election of Board of Education members who are pro-education

**Judge 3:** An excellent article on school boards and the power that they wield. This is well researched and well written — a good read for anyone just prior to school board voting. However, I don't believe it fits the requirements of the category

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 02

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

**Local:** Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

**Name of Entry:** Bobst Case Escalates to NLRB

**Publication/Website:** Momentum

**Issue Date:** Vol 34 Issue 2

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good explanation of complex situation and what it means to all members.

**Judge 2:** This article is an excellent description of union efforts regarding an issue of critical importance to members. Beginning with a clear description of the events leading up the current situation, the article provides a logical and very persuasive argument against the administration's changes to the job descriptions of the library assistants. Moreover, it goes on to explain how such changes are a threat to all the members, and describes the local's vigorous efforts to fight the changes. An excellent effort!

**Judge 3:** Writing about filing an Unfair Labor Practice with the NLRB could be deadly dull – or, in this case – could be a fascinating story that held my attention to the last word. One aspect of this struggle that I believe made it so compelling was the fact that this union of more than 1,300 members has gone all-out to address a university reorganization of jobs that affects about 30 members. That's just over 2 percent, if my math is correct. But as the writer points out, if the university succeeds with this small group, it ultimately threatens all union members. It's an inspiring story that – as of the time it was written – had not been completely resolved.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** High School Staff Volunteers at Ronald McDonald House

**Publication/Website:** STATIC

**Issue Date:** June 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Nice article about good effort.

**Judge 2:** An excellent article with wonderful photos about members' efforts on behalf of a worthwhile organization. The story does a good job of describing how Ronald McDonald House has a positive effect on the lives of the people that use its services, and how the local members advance those efforts.

**Judge 3:** This is a nice story, well illustrated, about community action – local members volunteering to prepare meals at a Ronald McDonald House, a home-away-from-home for families of seriously ill children. While it demonstrates the important example of members making a positive difference in the community, it doesn't directly address the category's other requirement about "helping to give voice to the voiceless."

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Nyack Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** NTA Members Say "Enough is Enough!"

**Publication/Website:** The Bridge

**Issue Date:** June 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Good arguments on common core and why we must rally.

**Judge 2:** Certainly the proliferation of excessive testing in our schools is one of the most critical issues facing teachers today, and attending a rally to protest such testing is an important activity. This article does an excellent job of describing the reasons behind the rally, and the photos are a wonderful accompaniment. But is this a social justice issue, or a union issue?

**Judge 3:** In this article, members of the Nyack TA attend a massive rally on Long Island to say "enough is enough" and to speak out for students who are being overtested. "Among us were teachers, students, parents, members from all over New York with one common purpose – to fight for the kids," the author writes.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** Spanish Students Sing for "Liberty and Justice for All"

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good article about social justice that ties teachers and students with allies.

**Judge 2:** This article does an excellent job of describing an important social justice issue in our country today – the conditions faced by farmworkers. But more than that, this teacher went above and beyond talking about these conditions by actually taking her students to Albany to lobby lawmakers. The descriptions of the issue, the day, and the reactions of those attending add up to a very impressive package.

**Judge 3:** A good accounting of a Cinco de Mayo visit to the state capitol by students in Spanish I and II, and their teachers, to sing and speak out for rights for farmworkers. This in-depth article also included some websites readers could visit to follow up and take part in this campaign.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Walkkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Sharing and Giving from the Heart in Walkkill

**Publication/Website:** IMPACT

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Nice article about a tremendous giving effort.

**Judge 2:** A commitment to helping those less fortunate is a very important social justice issue, and one that is also essential to pass on to children. The efforts of the union members in this school district to provide food and gifts around the holidays can't help but inspire their students. This article does an excellent job of describing the variety of projects taken on by members, and the photos are a wonderful accompaniment.

**Judge 3:** This timely report outlines the many activities undertaken by members to help needy families before and during the year-end holiday period. Activities at every school in the district are reported, and the article is well illustrated with photos of some participants.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Bay Shore Classroom Teachers' Association, Inc.

**Name of Entry:** The truth behind this summer's anti-educator ad

**Publication/Website:** The Answer

**Issue Date:** September 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very solid and thorough analysis.

**Judge 2:** What an excellent, informative and eye-opening article. Certainly, the anti-union and anti-teacher movements, which are apparently being funded by large corporations and other big money interests, are two of the most important social justice issues of our time. This well-written and well-researched article does an excellent job of laying out exactly where this propaganda is coming from, and how it's being financed. It's easy to read and understand, and builds a strong and very persuasive case.

**Judge 3:** I thoroughly enjoyed this well-written article about an anti-AFT ad. I wish it had been entered in the creative writing category, but I don't see its connection to social justice or members making a positive difference and helping give voice to the voiceless.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** Bias: A necessary conversation

**Publication/Website:** The WORD

**Issue Date:** Nov. 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very thought provoking report on good projects.

**Judge 2:** By reporting on a video produced by college staff, this article does an excellent job of calling attention to a serious problem in this country, in the community and on campus. "Bias," which describes violence and racial prejudice in the local area, helps educate students about this important issue. By citing specific incidents and quoting victims, the article brings to light a problem that many people believe only happened in the past or in other areas of the country.

**Judge 3:** A video on bias, created for a professional development workshop, provides the basis for this article, which delves into racial unrest and hate crimes on Long Island. The article provides solid data on racial issues facing Nassau and Suffolk counties and quotes workshop participants expressing their feelings on the issues. Very in-depth.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** PMCT HS Vice President Alicia Connelly-Foster's Letter to Whoopi Goldberg is Re-Blogged by Diane Ravitch

**Publication/Website:** SPEAK OUT

**Issue Date:** Fall 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Those teachers deserve applause for their very skillful effort.

**Judge 2:** It takes real courage to stand up for what you know is the truth, even when falsehoods are spoken by celebrities in front of a huge TV audience. This article does an excellent job of explaining how a member of the local union wrote a letter to Whoopi Goldberg to correct some of her misconceptions about tenure. The background that led to the letter is laid out clearly, and the text includes a link to the entire epistle.

**Judge 3:** The original letter was well-done and interesting. The fact that it was reblogged by Diane Ravitch is a worthy news item. I just don't see how either of them – especially the reblogging – fit into the social justice category as it has been defined.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** ACTION = REACTION Meeting with the Governor: Moratorium on teacher evaluations

**Publication/Website:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Issue Date:** June 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good report on important political action by local leaders and call to action.

**Judge 2:** This article is an interesting account of the author's meeting with the governor and several legislators about the important issue of testing and teacher evaluations. The issues are explained well, and the article concludes with a call to action on Election Day.

**Judge 3:** Another well written article that just doesn't seem to fit the category of social justice as defined in the entry requirements.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 03

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

**Local:** Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

**Name of Entry:** Not in a Thousand Years: A History of Domestic Partner Benefits at NYU

**Publication/Website:** Momentum

**Issue Date:** Vol 34 Issue 2

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A very impressive history of a long-term social justice fight.

**Judge 2:** Although securing benefits for domestic partners of LGBT employees is a very serious and complicated matter, this article explains the entire process in such an informal and conversational way that it's extremely easy to understand. By carefully detailing facts, dates and conversations, the article builds a strong case for the union's heavy involvement in the entire process, while at the same time involving and even entertaining the reader.

**Judge 3:** This is an interesting and well-documented report on how some persistent unionists finally prevailed on NYU to provide domestic partner benefits back in the early 1990s, long before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the Defense of Marriage Act. It's especially timely with the university now touting its 20-year support of domestic partner benefits. A story like this needs to be told every few years so the newest members can see what their union was doing for them years before they joined.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Creative Writing

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**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Why Pink? Let Me Count the Ways!

**Publication/Website:** STATIC

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Bravo — brave and personal account of worldwide problem.

**Judge 2:** What a wonderful, inspiring and, yes, very creative story! While there are many ways the writer could have told her tale, this first person account of her battle with breast cancer holds the reader's attention from beginning to end. Choosing to hang the whole story on her "dislike" of the color pink adds a humorous, yet poignant element, and brings the whole article full circle at the end.

**Judge 3:** What an incredibly well written article by a local member in the midst of treatment for Stage 3 breast cancer. She chooses to write not so much about her illness or her treatment or her coping with cancer but about the question of why breast cancer gets so much attention when there are so many other causes – and so many other cancers – out there. She asks the philosophical question in a most entertaining way, then answers it most informatively and eloquently. Aside from a brief update on her condition and admitting to a dislike for the color pink, this is not an article about the author. It's about the mothers, the sisters, the daughters and the wives. "We want to protect them, but we also want them to be there to protect us," she writes so well.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Lynbrook Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** From the President's Desk

**Publication/Website:** LTA EXAMINER

**Issue Date:** January 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice counterpoising of poem extolling teacher virtues with fights teachers face.

**Judge 2:** Choosing to tie together several interesting news items with the excellent poem by Taylor Mali works well. The poem stresses the importance of teachers in their students' lives, while the news items are all about attempts to marginalize teachers. In this case, the juxtaposition of the different elements brings both points home more forcefully.

**Judge 3:** An entertaining and informative president's column that deals with the many threats to public education, framed by the lyrics to a spoken word poem, "What Teachers Make." Well written and attractively presented by giving each topic (tenure, tax cap, collective bargaining, etc.) its own paragraph.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Nyack Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** The Mighty MAC gets your Voice Heard

**Publication/Website:** The Bridge

**Issue Date:** March 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Quality how-to guide for any member to have their voice heard.

**Judge 2:** This first-person account of how the Members Action Center works is an excellent device to encourage the reader to participate in the project. Instead of merely exhorting members to visit the online site, the writer actually walks the reader through a sample visit. Demonstrating the simplicity of its operation is a creative way to nudge the reader to actually do such a worthwhile activity. While the article is generally well written, the constant change of tense from present to past is somewhat distracting and confusing.

**Judge 3:** Nice first-person article on NYSUT's Members Action Center by this newsletter's editor, who outlined a visit to the site and how she submitted a letter to her local state lawmakers in Albany. A good service to members who may be reluctant to try something like this on their own.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** My District, 'Tis of Thee: A Letter to the RVF

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Excellent piece pushing against the tide of anti-teacher criticism and recognizing day-to-day contributions of teachers.

**Judge 2:** Responding to a perceived insult to the members by writing an impassioned letter praising their daily efforts on behalf of the students is a very creative path to follow. The letter is well written and persuasive, and while offering encouragement to the reader also serves to dispel the allegations made by the administration. While the informal, passionate language is interesting and easy to read, I think the same points could have been made in a shorter story.

**Judge 3:** Very effective open letter to members to remind them that despite what they may hear from administrators, they are doing a good job, they are helping students, they are professionals and they are appreciated by their colleagues. Well-written and makes its points very effectively. Although presentation is not judged in this category, I would have broken up the huge banks of type into more readable short paragraphs, and maybe added some subheads. But the writing and the topic were excellent.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Walkkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** The Learning Curve

**Publication/Website:** IMPACT

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good article about how attending the RA and new officers' elections helped build new level of union consciousness and activity.

**Judge 2:** This first-person account of NYSUT's Representative Assembly is well written and interesting. Rather than just spouting the "party line," the writer actually lays out her reactions to everything she saw and heard, giving a fresh and creative commentary on what could have been a dry recital of speeches and agendas.

**Judge 3:** This was a captivating article about "The Learning Curve" – a new NYSUT leadership, a union's feelings about the change, and its own efforts to increase membership interest and activity. Writer does a good job of tying all of these issues together and predicting good things to come.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Yorktown Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** An Interview with John Roden on the Early Days of YCT History

**Publication/Website:** Yorktown Congressional Record

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Terrific inspiring story of how one local union grew and how the lessons of '60s apply today.

**Judge 2:** What an interesting and inspirational story! And what a wonderful idea to interview a local union member, John Roden, who had actually participated in the very early days of the teachers' labor movement! This story is well written and the vivid language makes the reader almost feel as it's unfolding right in front of him. It's a fascinating look back at a time that few teachers still recall. However, I think it would have been possible to leave out some incidents and abridge others, creating a more concise story.

**Judge 3:** While I have a litany of issues about the way this article was presented, the bottom line is that I couldn't put it down. It was that compelling. Even though I was already familiar with the topic, I read through four long, grey, type-filled pages about the history of this local union that kept my interest right down to the last sentence. I give it high marks for telling a story that is so important for the newest generation of union members to hear at a time when the future of unionism is in real danger. As the writer tells us: "There are many striking parallels between the situation we, as teacher-unionists, are in today" and the challenges faced by the union's organizers 40 years ago.

That said, I worry that this very worthy story might have been ignored by the very people who most need to hear it. Basically, this is an interview with the first president of this union, who was jailed along with a score of colleagues in their efforts to organize in the early 1970s. First, this story could have been illustrated with one of the many compelling photos of suburban Yorktown teachers being hauled off to jail. That could help capture the attention of the new, 20-something member who asks: "What has the union done for me?" It could have had a photo of the interviewee. Without some visual relief, it's tough to hold the attention of readers with a story that runs four solid pages without a break.

While this is an interview with the founding president, we don't get much direct comment from him. Instead, the writer tells us what he said in the interview. Even being told second-hand, it's a riveting story, but it would be even more effective if more of it was

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

being told directly by the man who lived it.

Again, my criticisms aside, it's a great story that this union needs to tell periodically. My congratulations to the writer.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Bay Shore Classroom Teachers' Association, Inc.

**Name of Entry:** Are you living in not so blissful ignorance?

**Publication/Website:** The Answer

**Issue Date:** September 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A good call to action, but I found the tone a little "biting."

**Judge 2:** This article is an excellent example of how creative writing can help make a point much more effectively than a dry recital of facts. By describing an actual incident in which colleagues were unaware of an important event – a pending case in California that threatens tenure -- and following it up with a series of rhetorical questions and short, declarative sentences, the article builds a very strong argument. In fact, I'd be surprised if the reader didn't at least consider doing one or more of the suggested actions at the end.

**Judge 3:** A good, hard-hitting article on the dangers of remaining uninformed about issues like the growing threats to tenure. The author deals well with the question of who is responsible for keeping members informed. A well written opinion piece.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** I love Paris in the springtime: Why Leslie Derenfeld is our most prolific  
Wheels presenter

**Publication/Website:** The WORD

**Issue Date:** Feb. 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A heartwarming story about great community outreach program that touches the lives of elderly.

**Judge 2:** What a wonderful story about a very inspirational woman who presents programs to residents of assisted living centers. The writer grabs your attention right at the beginning with the nickel challenge and the puzzle – who can resist a puzzle? – and holds it all the way to the end when she brings it right back full circle to the nickel. The vivid language used to describe the elderly residents and their reactions to the presentations brings them to life in a very creative way, and the professor's words about their worth are touching and inspirational. An excellent story!

**Judge 3:** It seems like every year this local scores big with a story or a touching photo from their popular program to bring educational lectures, workshops and classes to senior residents of local nursing homes and assisted living facilities. This year's entry keeps up that tradition with a charming and well-written feature on one of the program's more prolific presenters. It opens with a nice anecdote; it's dotted with great quotes throughout and has a cute ending. But like other entries in previous years, this article also reinforces the basic purpose of this program – to give back a sense of purpose and self-worth to people who are being provided for in all other ways as they grow older.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** TEACHER BASHING: A RIGHT WING "SPORT" THAT GOES BACK MANY GENERATIONS

**Publication/Website:** The Agenda

**Issue Date:** Winter 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A good historical overview of attacks on teachers — mostly shameful and foul. Good mix of analysis and anger.

**Judge 2:** The writer uses a combination of well-researched facts and first-person reminiscences to build a strong argument against the “teacher bashing” that is so prevalent in today’s society. By citing a variety of examples where teachers have been blamed for clearly unrelated situations, the article creates a persuasive and passionate case against such incidents.

**Judge 3:** This is a well-written article on the history of teacher-bashing. While it is obviously preaching to the choir, it is a very detailed article that outlines some of the history of teacher-bashing, going back to the end of World War II. It certainly contains some good rebuttal arguments for those who are accosted by critics of the profession. Nice job.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** May's History/Heroine of the Month: Evelyn Dubrow

**Publication/Website:** SPEAK OUT

**Issue Date:** April 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Interesting bio of labor leader but could use more tie-in to today's battles.

**Judge 2:** What an excellent article about a very inspirational woman! Although concise and to the point, the writer's description of Evelyn Dubrow, one of the earliest and most influential labor lobbyists of all time, brings her to life in a very vivid way. The list of her accomplishments, combined with her earthy quotes, illustrates that she was not only a woman to admire, but a very human one as well.

**Judge 3:** A very interesting and well-written profile of Evelyn Dubrow, a former ILGWU lobbyist. Articles that remind younger members of the efforts and sacrifices of their predecessors are a valuable service.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** My Sunday Morning Ritual

**Publication/Website:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A lovely piece about the quiet time in one teacher's life — Sunday morning.

**Judge 2:** This first-person story of the writer's Sunday mornings is so well written and interesting that the reader almost feels as if he or she is sitting at the breakfast table with a cup of coffee. The description of the writer's favorite television program is varied and complete, yet very concise. The reader receives an excellent overview of the program – enough to make it desired viewing – without a list of every single segment ever broadcast.

**Judge 3:** A cute feature about the author's Sunday morning ritual and how the TV show "CBS Sunday Morning" is part of that ritual. It's a tribute to those interesting, lighthearted human-interest features that seem to get short shrift on other news programs. The page-long feature also includes one of the author's favorite french toast recipes. Nice job on a story that kind of captures the essence of the TV show.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 04

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Creative Writing

**Local:** Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

**Name of Entry:** The AFT Convention: A First-time Delegates View

**Publication/Website:** Momentum

**Issue Date:** Vol 35 Issue 3

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A very good first-hand analysis of how one member and one local can affect and be affected by national convention.

**Judge 2:** This account of a delegate's first experience at an AFT convention is well written and interesting. The writer describes the events and her reaction to them in a colorful and easy to understand way, without lapsing into jargon or reciting dry facts. Her understanding of how all the delegates' experiences are related is well-told, and the description of the delegate's vote on the pipeline is excellent.

**Judge 3:** Articles about a delegate's visit to a NYSUT, AFT or NEA convention are a popular topic, particularly those with observances by a first-time attendee. This well-written feature does just that. The author here attended her first AFT convention and does a nice job of providing background on how the convention works; covers remarks by noted speakers; discusses how her local's issues mesh with national issues; and quotes other delegates from his local. These are difficult stories to do well, but this one covers all the important points.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Overall Graphic Design

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**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** STATIC

**Publication/Website:** STATIC

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Member photos, large print, interesting pictures and art work all good.

**Judge 2:** From the festive holiday-themed cover to the "Race Back to School" photo page, STATIC is an attractive, colorful publication. The many photos and graphic elements do an excellent job of complementing the stories and drawing readers into the text. My only suggestions would be to use a two-column format to improve readability, increase white space, and don't separate the headlines from the stories with a separate box.

**Judge 3:** Great use of color throughout this Christmas issue. Many well-thought-out photos and an eye-catching layout. It gets a little "busy" at times, with many different things vying for our attention, but it is certainly not dull. I would describe this layout as "enthusiastic," and I'm sure that enthusiasm is picked up by the readers. Nice work.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Lynbrook Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** LTA EXAMINER

**Publication/Website:** LTA EXAMINER

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Pleasant, good content, member photos. Could bump up type size.

**Judge 2:** The LTA Examiner is clean, easy to read and attractive. There is plenty of white space, and the graphics are simple and relevant to the content. The "In This Issue" section on the cover is especially good, telling readers in a snap what's inside and using a nice graphic to reinforce the message. My only suggestions would be to use a different color than green for the name of the publication – green on green is very difficult to read – and to use larger and better quality photos.

**Judge 3:** Nice front-page with good use of color and well-designed flag. Three-column format is attractive and makes reading easier. A lot of information in these four pages and still plenty of needed white space.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** New Hartford Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** The Chalkboard

**Publication/Website:** The Chalkboard

**Issue Date:** June 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very pleasant format highlighting retiring teacher. A little too much "sameness" on each page.

**Judge 2:** Like an announcement written on the board at the front of the classroom, The Chalkboard doesn't let fancy graphic elements or garish colors get in the way of its message. The simple sans-serif typeface and matching headline type and the attractive light blue shading serve to highlight the words themselves, and the colorful headshots that add such a human touch to almost every story. However, I'm not sure the tiny graphics add anything to the articles' impact, and I'd love to see a lot more white space to set off each story.

**Judge 3:** Overall, this is a very attractive publication. Good use of color, without overdoing it. It's nice to see articles with complete headlines – many of them well-thought-out and clever. Editors did not skimp on photos, and all of them, including the head shots, are good size. My only suggestion would be to break up the banks of type into more and shorter paragraphs, particularly on the cover, to help the readers.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Nyack Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** So Long and Thanks for all the Cookies: The NTA Says Goodbye to President Donna Ramundo

**Publication/Website:** The Bridge

**Issue Date:** Summer 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice tribute to retiring president. Perhaps format and design could have been more dynamic.

**Judge 2:** This striking layout with the pullquote in the lower left-hand corner set off by white space is an excellent way to draw the reader into the story. The three-column format is easy to read, but the overly ornate headline type is very difficult to decipher, especially when placed against a gray shade. The pullquote would also be more effective in a less flowery typeface. This is one of those situations where the typeface itself creates an attractive graphic element, but the words are lost.

**Judge 3:** This publication gets better and more creative each year, as shown by this two-page tribute to a beloved and very effective outgoing president. A cover page of 15 photos looks good, even in black-and-white. The P. 2 tributes read well. I would have simply broken up the type into more paragraphs to make it easier to read.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** THE UNION SOUND

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** Spring 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Pleasant, easy to read format, good mix of words and pictures.

**Judge 2:** This attractive publication uses a simple design, graphics and layout to effectively convey the message of the stories. For example, the lead story about the RA Assembly is reinforced by both the headline and the words pictured on the sweater "Change (Embrace It). The following pages are also easy to read with a three-column format and ragged-right type, and good photos that advance the ideas in the articles. My only suggestion would be to use a single typeface throughout, and more white space to separate the stories.

**Judge 3:** Good, straightforward design. Attractive flag on the cover page and an easy-to-follow index. Well-written heads on all the articles and liberal use of photos. Some of the photos could have benefited from captions, and as an outsider I did not know what the back page photo spread was about, other than a celebration of solidarity. Is this a union function or an event that the union takes part in?

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Walkkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** IMPACT

**Publication/Website:** IMPACT

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Pleasant, easy read, good use of words and graphics.

**Judge 2:** This publication uses a simple, easy-to-read layout, plenty of white space and simple colors to boost the IMPACT of its stories. The photos are attractive and do a good job of complementing the message of the articles. My only suggestions would be to use a bolder type for the words inside the dark blue box on the cover. Many of them are difficult to read.

**Judge 3:** Very attractive cover page for this publication. Articles throughout are well illustrated with photos and other artwork. Good headlines. Easy-to-follow format with lots of useful information. I liked the two-column format and find it easier to read than the single-column style on a couple of the pages.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Arlington Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** THE EDUCATOR

**Publication/Website:** THE EDUCATOR

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good, easy to use political action chart that could be read and/or displayed. Inside articles hammered home issue's main theme.

**Judge 2:** This attractive layout is an excellent example of how good graphic design can help convey a message and inspire action. The clear and easy-to-understand chart of the gubernatorial candidates and where they stand on certain key issues gives prospective voters an important tool in making their decision. And the complete list of candidates for other offices and any endorsements they have received is also very helpful, while the photos and their cutlines give even more insight into which candidates support educational goals. Anyone who spends 10 minutes with these two pages has a very strong incentive to go and vote, and a clear idea of who to vote for.

**Judge 3:** Great centerspread with everything a reader needs to know about the U.S., state and local candidates and where they stand on education issues. Well-laid-out and as simple and straightforward as you can get with a complicated topic like this. A great service to readers and obviously a lot of work for editors. Nice job.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** Same \$hit, different year

**Publication/Website:** The WORD

**Issue Date:** Feb. 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Clever graphic would make you read article but could also be a turn-off to readers. Headline, same reaction.

**Judge 2:** This cover certainly grabs the reader's attention. The catchy headline, combined with the effective illustration, is enough to pull anyone into the article. However, wrapping the graphics into the copy creates small and oddly shaped columns that are very difficult to read.

**Judge 3:** Looking strictly at the overall graphic design, this is an attractive cover page. The artwork is creative, the flag is simple but effective, the three-column format is easy to read and the index is concise but complete. My only quibble is with the headline. It's way too small to carry the story, but perhaps that's a blessing in this case.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** "FIRST BOOK" INITIATIVE/NYSUT BOWLING FIRST PAGE

**Publication/Website:** The Agenda

**Issue Date:** Winter 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice article about two important projects with lots of member participation. I would expand size of pictures to highlight members more and downsize text (both clear and well-written.)

**Judge 2:** It's always a great idea to put photos on the front of any publication, and this cover page is also packed with information for readers. However, the photos are dark and have too many people in them. A close-up of three or four people would be more effective. And the headlines, especially the top two lines, are so close together that they're very difficult to read. Using a lot more white space throughout the page would make it much more attractive.

**Judge 3:** A very newsy front page, including a good photo of the "First Book" initiative. Below it, the bowling story and accompanying photo bring up two conflicting points – on one hand it's good to get the names of members in the paper as often as possible, but when you have nearly 20 people in a photo it's tough to run it large enough to make them show up and it takes up a lot of space to identify all of them in a caption.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** SPEAK OUT

**Publication/Website:** SPEAK OUT

**Issue Date:** September 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Clear, easy and pleasant to read — good use of bold for emphasis. You can tell this an active local.

**Judge 2:** SPEAK OUT is a very attractive publication. The simple color scheme doesn't distract readers from the stories, and the photos are mainly closeups of faces, which tend to draw the reader's eye to the article. The three-column page is easy to read, but a ragged right format would minimize some of the odd spaces between words. And it would be nice if one of the excellent photos were on the cover, perhaps with a line inviting readers to the story that goes with it.

**Judge 3:** This publication packs in a lot of information for its readers, especially its first issue of the new school year. Three-column format on cover and most inside pages is easy to read. Some artwork on the cover would help break up the banks of type. Also, running the complete minutes of the union board meetings is a great service to members, but I would not run them in a boldface type (it would help reduce the length) and I would try to find some artwork to break up the long paragraphs.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 05

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Overall Graphic Design

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** CUOMO RALLY

**Publication/Website:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice pictorial of members' anti-Cuomo picket — good recognition of members!

**Judge 2:** These two pages are an excellent example of how photos can convey more information than words. The colorful pictures, focusing on the faces and signs of the marchers, gives the reader a much clearer idea of the emotions and events of the day than two pages of narrative would have done.

**Judge 3:** This publication makes good use of its centerspread for a photo display of an anti-Cuomo rally. More than 20 color photos of protestors carrying some very clever signs. My only quibble: I would have run a more descriptive headline than "Cuomo Rally." Maybe take the message from the one sign that read: "Cuomo is rated ineffective." But that's a minor issue. It's a very attractive layout.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Photo or Illustration

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**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Hastings Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** Hastings TA Making Strides Photo

**Publication/Website:** Hastings Teachers Flickr

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/hastingsteachers/15991964458/>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nice photo of local members participating in community walk. Those entwined arms and trees — nice frame for picture.

**Judge 2:** This expressive photo truly embodies the spirit of solidarity. The two people wearing their HTA T-shirts with their arms entwined illustrates the support and encouragement members give each other while striving toward their goal. An excellent photo.

**Judge 3:** Usually it's the faces that make a photo, but sometimes you can say more with a photo in which everyone's back is to the camera. This is a nice, candid shot that conveys the essence of union solidarity as well as the union taking a role in a community-wide activity and being an essential part of the community.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** TRIPLE WORD SCORE

**Publication/Website:** STATIC

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very nicely done photo that I'm sure resonated with members. Applaud attention to detail.

**Judge 2:** This excellent illustration does an wonderful job of conveying an important message to members with a bare minimum of words. The Schalmont mug, combined with the word "breathe" on the Scrabble rack and the "Triple Word Score" perfectly captures the spirit of the President's end-of-school year message to relax. My only suggestion would be to use a lighter color background if the name of the publication is dark green. It barely shows up at all against the black.

**Judge 3:** I like this on several levels. It's a good, sharp, detailed photo that has the added benefit of being very creative. It conveys an important message in a slightly unusual fashion. Great work by the photographer, and great coordination between the photographer and the local president. My only criticism, which doesn't affect the judging, is the headline. I would have made it bigger, run it above the photo and maybe found something better than the stencil typeface.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Nyack Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** The NTA Takes Action

**Publication/Website:** The Bridge

**Issue Date:** March 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A classic labor photo incorporating members and slogans.

**Judge 2:** This photo does an excellent job of expressing the solidarity of the members as they walk together as a single unit carrying their signs. The action of the photo combined with the determination on the faces carries the message of the story very effectively.

**Judge 3:** Nice photo, well-composed, which shows union members protesting at the office of their local state senator. Photographer did a nice balancing act, focusing on three protestors while still showing a number of other participants so readers have a sense of just how large a gathering this was.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** PUBLIC EDUCATION WORKS!

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** May 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Nice photo emphasizes good messages — how we relate to kids and love of reading and need for voter support.

**Judge 2:** Showing a teaching professional clearly engaged with a group of students is probably the best way to illustrate the words “Public Education Works!” The background, the expressions on the faces and, most of all, the students’ obvious interest in the books, conveys the message better than a page full of words.

**Judge 3:** I like this one. I believe this is a black-and-white publication (the entry was b&w) and this photo works very well in black-and-white. It is well-composed, although I found the wire rack a little distracting. A creative photo like this is truly a clever way to illustrate the message that “public education works.”

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Walkkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Sharing and Giving from the Heart in Walkkill

**Publication/Website:** IMPACT

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Local's good work deserves lots of credit for generous spirit. I would have liked photo more if subjects were looking up at us.

**Judge 2:** Showing the three women so obviously engaged in a charitable holiday endeavor is an excellent way to illustrate the union's efforts on behalf of the community. It would be even more effective if the photo were larger and cropped so that there was more emphasis on faces and less on the background.

**Judge 3:** I give this photo points for being well-composed and technically correct. It makes good use of color, especially red and green in an issue that was running just prior to Christmas. But I don't believe it rises to the level of creativity we would look for in a "Best Photo" category. Nevertheless, the photographer deserves credit for technical competence, both on this photo and the other one on the page that was submitted. We don't often see enough photos that are simply well-shot and run large enough to distinguish faces.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Bay Shore Classroom Teachers' Association, Inc.

**Name of Entry:** Sending a message

**Publication/Website:** The Answer

**Issue Date:** March 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Those smiling smart faces draw you right into wanting to read the story on their T-shirts.

**Judge 2:** This photo of the six women standing together in solidarity with a single message on their shirts does an excellent job of making a point about cuts to state aid. The photo is not only eye-catching, but also an effective way to make a point. It would be even better if the words on the shirts were easier to read.

**Judge 3:** Nice photo: six women identically dressed in jeans and matching T-shirts "sending a message" to end unfair cuts to state aid. I found it impressive in black-and-white, but if it originally ran in color I would like to have judged a color version. While some photos work well in black and white, this one screams out for color with the T-shirts and the brick wall behind the women. Nevertheless, it's a great photo and a great idea.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** The misdirection of modern American education

**Publication/Website:** The WORD

**Issue Date:** March 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** As Rod Stewart said, "Every picture tells a story, don't it?" Nicely composed photo with two young students whose posture tells us so much about theme of article. Unusual and a winner!

**Judge 2:** I just love this photo illustration! It catches the attention immediately – who can resist looking at two cute kids? – while simultaneously tugging at the heartstrings with pity for the poor children who are literally buried by work. The point is made whether the reader peruses every word of the story or not. Excellent work!

**Judge 3:** Very, very creative photo of two obviously worn-out youngsters to illustrate an opinion piece on the ills of Common Core curricula, standardized testing and teacher evaluations. When I say that this photo looks like it was purchased from a stock photo library, it is meant as a compliment. It is creative, provocative and just plain well-done. Nice job.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** "FIRST BOOK" INITIATIVE

**Publication/Website:** The Agenda

**Issue Date:** Winter 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A great shot that captures the commitment of many individuals helping to make project a success.

**Judge 2:** The large piles of books in this photo do an excellent job of conveying the magnitude of this excellent project made possible by the members' work. It would have been even better if we could have clearly seen some faces or, better yet, the faces of children receiving the books.

**Judge 3:** Nice photo to illustrate a page-one story on the First Book program. The piles of books stacked up all around effectively illustrate the goal of the program to give a free book to every student. This photo does a great job of showing readers what the program is all about.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** Chicago TA/T-shirt Exchange

**Publication/Website:** SPEAK OUT

**Issue Date:** 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** This portrait invites members to be involved — the leaders' faces send a clear "you're invited" message.

**Judge 2:** What better way could there be to illustrate solidarity than a group of union members holding shirts from another union with the words "UNION STRONG." The vivid colors and expressive faces capture the reader's attention immediately, while the words and faces combine to convey a strong message. An excellent effort.

**Judge 3:** Here is a great way to illustrate a T-shirt exchange between a Long Island union and the beleaguered Chicago teachers union. A dozen members of this local pose with Chicago T-shirts and hold up samples of their own tees that have been sent to Chicago. With a strong emphasis on red, white and blue, it's a striking photo that certainly would have captured the attention of readers.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Looking Ahead

**Publication/Website:** FACULTY FOCUS

**Issue Date:** June 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** The illustration is clever, but I'm not entirely sure how it fits into message.

**Judge 2:** The illustration of the mascot bull looking up at the street sign labeled "Google Drive" does an excellent job of conveying the idea of moving ahead toward a desired goal. Although the idea of change may be unsettling, this illustration gives the reader a reassuring nudge into the future.

**Judge 3:** I like this illustration for a column on the district's upcoming move to Google products. The artwork is simple, but very professional. I'll admit I'm not entirely sure what the bull represents, unless it's the author's bullishness on switching to Google, but it's a nice piece of artwork nevertheless, and I hope the editors are making good use of this artist. I would have run the illustration even larger.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 06

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Photo or Illustration

**Local:** Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

**Name of Entry:** HISTORY VOTES YES

**Publication/Website:** Momentum

**Issue Date:** Vol 34 Issue 4

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Another solidarity-type photo that sends a positive message about labor.

**Judge 2:** The smile, the raised fists, the union logo and, most of all, the words on the sign do an excellent job of conveying the message of an important union vote. This photo illustration not only reports the facts of an event, it truly captures the emotions of the people participating in the event.

**Judge 3:** In union publications, it's difficult to get away from photos of groups of people holding up signs, so it's always nice to see newsletter editors continuing to be creative in carrying out this mission. This photo of NYU graduate students celebrating their vote to unionize is well composed and captures the happy mood of the event. The large, horizontal sign is eye-catching, and the students have their fists raised in solidarity. Nice illustration of an important cover story.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Most User-Friendly Website

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**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** I

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** East Williston Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** East Williston Teachers' Association Website

**Publication/Website:** East Williston Teachers' Association Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.ewtaunion.org](http://www.ewtaunion.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A lively and interesting website packed with good information. Could use more photos.

**Judge 2:** This excellent website, although not fancy, does a good job of informing members. The content is useful and well organized, and the site is very easy to navigate. I would love to see a photo on every page, however, and the logos in the background would be less distracting if they were smaller and not as dark.

**Judge 3:** Very attractive, straightforward and easy-to-follow site. Home page has a full carousel of constantly changing photos. Users can click on the common topics that most members are looking for, including political action, archives, in the news, outside links and retirees. All news and information pages carried up-to-date material, both locally produced and from NYSUT and other sources, as well as up-to-date Tweets. Only the blog was dated, with the latest entry dating back to October 2014. Nevertheless, this is a great example of what locals can – and should – be doing.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** I

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Hastings Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** Hastings Teachers Association Website

**Publication/Website:** Hastings Teachers Association Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.hastingsta.org](http://www.hastingsta.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** This is a very user-friendly site. Good photos, clearly delineated subject matter, oodles of information.

**Judge 2:** This simple, yet very attractive web site is easy to use and navigate. The photos are excellent, and the information is arranged in a logical and easy to find way. The changing photos at the top of the home page are very engaging, and most of the content is up high, so the reader is not forced to scroll down and down and down.

**Judge 3:** Excellent presentation of news and information on this attractive website. This is obviously an effort aimed at making the community aware of the local and its members, and the good things they are doing, both in the classroom and in the community. One entire page is devoted to community activities that the local participates in. Everything is up to date and timely, including coming events, Facebook posts and Tweets. Very nice job.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** I

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Schalmont Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Schalmont Teachers' Association Website

**Publication/Website:** Schalmont Teachers' Association Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** <http://www.schalmontta.org>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Another really good user-friendly site. Photos pull you in because they illustrate many facets of local's work. Lots of good information to click on.

**Judge 2:** This colorful website not only gives members a wealth of information, it is updated right up to the minute! The day I visited the last post was less than an hour old. The photos and artwork on the home page are excellent, and all the links work well. However, the scrolling headlines at the top of the page are distracting, and some of the color choices are difficult to read – dark red type on a dark green background, for example.

**Judge 3:** Another attractive and well-designed site. This one is very member-oriented, with information on topics ranging from professional development, insurance, member benefits to leaves of absence and National Board Certification. Information is well-presented but occasionally out of date. The latest announcement was nearly two weeks old at the time the site was viewed. However, it was the first day back after the February break, so this may be an unusual occurrence. Additionally, when I first tried to access the website using only schalmontta.org, I got a message saying the site was under construction and coming soon. I had to enter www to make it work.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** II

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Wallkill Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Wallkill Teachers' Association Website

**Publication/Website:** Wallkill Teachers' Association Website

**Issue Date:** December 2014

**URL:** [www.wallkillteachers.org](http://www.wallkillteachers.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good feature — if you like the website, spread the word. Very good variety of topic available. Didn't feel as current as some but still very good.

**Judge 2:** This very attractive website gives members a wealth of important information. The links all work well, and the content is arranged in a useful and logical way. My only suggestion would be to use larger and bolder type for the links at the left of the page, and I don't think it's necessary to repeat them at the top AND on the side.

**Judge 3:** Nice website. Easy to navigate, up-to-date information and plenty of useful and timely material for both members and parents and the general public. My only complaint is the pop-up that kept following me around, asking me to "like" the site on social media. Once you kill that screen, it shouldn't keep coming back.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:**III

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Connetquot Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** Connetquot Teacher's Association Website

**Publication/Website:** Connetquot Teacher's Association Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** <http://stateofconnetquot.org>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good website — tons of information. Format felt crowded. Maybe cut quantity of front page stories to newer ones get more play.

**Judge 2:** This simple and attractive website is packed with information about members' activities and their interactions with the community. However, it doesn't seem to be updated very often – the most recent item is from last September – and the visitor must scroll down and down and down for the older items. It would be better to group the information by topic, and create navigation links at the top of the home page to reach them.

**Judge 3:** This is an attractive and information-filled site, generally limited to news and general-interest items. However, the top two items on the home page were from September and November and the single page of items continues all the way back to 2007. It does have a convenient, easy-to-follow archive, however, that lets readers pull up abbreviated versions of articles by year.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** III

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Website

**Publication/Website:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.fascc.org](http://www.fascc.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Terrific website with just about anything a member would want to know. Website reflects local's good work.

**Judge 2:** This attractive and extremely user-friendly website is packed with information and very easy to navigate. The top story is right up to the minute, and all the information and links are right there at the top of the home page, so the visitor doesn't need to scroll down at all. The information is arranged in a logical way, and the links all work well. There are also fun sections packed in with the serious and essential facts -- I LOVE the slide show of the holiday party! My only suggestion would be to open a new page when the link goes to another site or a handbook, making it easier to return home.

**Judge 3:** This site has something for everyone and makes it easy for anyone to find what they're looking for. News is up-to-date. On the day the site was reviewed, the lead news item had moved just four hours prior. Menus offer the full gamut of information, including one specifically for adjuncts. A great source of information for all members.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:**III

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Website

**Publication/Website:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** <http://www.pmct.org>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good click-ons from Class Size Matters to Ravitch prominently placed. Excellent coverage of local activities. The blue tone adds a sameness that makes it hard to differentiate priority and importance of materials.

**Judge 2:** This attractive website packs a wealth of information of interest to members. The announcement of the upcoming meeting is front and center at the top of the page, as it should be, and the navigation links across the top of the page bring the visitor to other important areas of interest. (Except the link on the far left. It doesn't work.) However, while the blue and white design is very attractive, the white reverse type on light blue is difficult to read, while the blue type on blue background is almost impossible.

**Judge 3:** Lots of useful information on this website. News and information is timely, including Tweets and relevant news items from Facebook page. This is obviously a community-oriented site, with a number of photos and articles dealing with community outreach projects. Home page menus offer information on virtually any topic a member might be interested in. The site even includes a "blogroll" devoted to education-related blogs. A great source of easy-to-find information.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** III

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Smithtown Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Smithtown Teachers' Association Website

**Publication/Website:** Smithtown Teachers' Association Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.smithtownta.com](http://www.smithtownta.com)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Clearly another activist. Smart local dealing with different issues but urging members to action. It would help if rest of website had more links to broaden members' knowledge on issues.

**Judge 2:** This simple website gives members important, current information without overwhelming the visitor with page after page of old press releases and outdated events. The design is attractive, and the links all work well. The pages that are PDF's open in a new page, making it easy to return to the main site. My only suggestion would be to actually list the building reps and meeting dates on the page, instead of forcing visitors to open two separate PDF's to get the information.

**Judge 3:** Information contained on this site is up to date and easy to navigate. A very member-oriented site with a handy home page link to NYSUT's Member Action Center, where users can send letters to lawmakers. While it doesn't offer all the bells and whistles contained on some other sites, what it provides is timely, useful and easy to find.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

## In-Service

**Category Code:** 07

**Class:** III

**Category:** Most User-Friendly Website

**Local:** Wappingers Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** Wappingers Congress of Teachers Website

**Publication/Website:** Wappingers Congress of Teachers Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [wcteachers.org](http://wcteachers.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** This is another very good website that has everything members need to know to be involved. It could use some more active elements to urge members toward the helpful left side click-ons. Spice up front page.

**Judge 2:** This attractive website is very easy to navigate, and offers lots of information arranged in a very logical way. The members-only part of the site is extremely useful, with access to virtually all the forms and information about benefits that a member could need. The changing photos at the top of the home page are excellent, and very welcoming. The links that lead to another site open in a new page, making it easy to return to the main site. My only suggestion would be to put more information about the upcoming NYSCATE conference right on the page, rather than forcing the visitor to click on several different links to even find out the date of the conference.

**Judge 3:** Good-looking, timely, packed with information and easy to navigate. This site has it all. A carousel of ever-changing member photos brings color to a page filled with up-to-date items of news and general information. The Member Resource menu contains more than 20 choices, but is alphabetized and easy to scroll through to find whatever topic you're looking for – whether it's APPR and observation forms, professional development information, a blogroll or contract data. Nice job.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Use of Social Media

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**Category Code:** 08

**Class:** I

**Category:** Best Use of Social Media

**Local:** Hastings Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** Hastings TA Social Media

**Publication/Website:** Hastings TA Social Media Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Website

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** <http://www.facebook.com/HastingsTeachersAssociation> &

<http://www.twitter.com/HastingsTeacher> &

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hastingsteachers/sets> & [www.hastingsta.org](http://www.hastingsta.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Fresh and interesting and invites members to take action. Very good.

**Judge 2:** When I clicked on the Facebook page – on a Sunday night – the newest post was 20 minutes old! Wow! And there were plenty more – all relevant and interesting – from just the past week. Very, very impressive! The same is true on Twitter, and if you really helped achieve a “trend,” that’s more than impressive. I love the photos on flickr. They’re uniformly excellent, and arranged neatly in albums that make it very easy to find a certain day or event.

**Judge 3:** This local has put together an impressive campaign using social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Flickr, all of it linked to the union’s website. Up-to-the minute updates on Twitter and Facebook keep members and outside viewers informed about local, statewide and national issues in education and labor. The local’s many community activities are documented on Flickr and in YouTube videos, which are also accessible from the website. They do a great job focusing on what they say are the union’s initiatives – member mobilization, community outreach and political action.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 08

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Use of Social Media

**Local:** Lynbrook Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** Lynbrook Teachers Association Facebook

**Publication/Website:** Lynbrook Teachers Association Facebook

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lynbrook-Teachers-Association/143322819071350>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Also very good. Connects you to all the relevant issues and lots of members in action photos.

**Judge 2:** The group's Facebook page is reasonably up to date, and offers plenty of relevant information. But it's all in the form of retweets, which is a useful way to offer positions on a variety of issues all in one place. There's virtually no original content, however, and it's all tweets, no traditional Facebook-type pictures or descriptions of event or issues.

**Judge 3:** This local certainly makes good use of its Facebook page to keep members and other viewers up to the minute on issues in education and labor. Items are timely and of a wide variety. Some might criticize the use of so many retweeted items, but I think good information and good commentary on the issues are valuable no matter how they are collected. This site certainly tells the members what their union is doing for them and shows them how they can support their union and their profession.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 08

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Use of Social Media

**Local:** Arlington Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** Arlington Teachers' Association Facebook Page

**Publication/Website:** Arlington Teachers' Association Facebook Page

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.facebook.com/pages/Arlington-Teachers-Association/112331112197159](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Arlington-Teachers-Association/112331112197159)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good mix of text, photos and graphics. Deals with wide variety of issues affecting members.

**Judge 2:** This Facebook page is a textbook lesson in how to engage with members in an up-to-the-minute, interesting and relevant way. The posts are frequent and always concise and easy to read. Many urge members to action, whether it's attending a school board meeting, contacting the governor and legislators, or attending a fund-raiser for a scholarship fund.

**Judge 3:** Here is a Facebook page with a lot of value for members, parents, politicians, and anyone with an interest in public education. On the days it was judged, some of the relevant items included: an agenda of an upcoming school board meeting; how to sign up for email or text reminders from the local about union-related activities; a referral to the latest issue of the union newsletter; and a copy of a 1929 local teacher's contract with an area school. A link from the union's website would help drive more traffic to the page.



# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 08

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Use of Social Media

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Facebook Page

**Publication/Website:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Facebook Page

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.facebook.com/FASCC](http://www.facebook.com/FASCC)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A terrific website. Clear focus on what's happening in Albany and the impact on the local unions these folks helped build. But also coverage of important national labor issues - and the statehouse in Florida, which seems as troublesome as our Capitol. Friendly tone, easy-to-use and helpful info on the many ways to connect with this very active group. Nicely done.

**Judge 2:** This Facebook page is an up-to-the-minute collection of interesting observations on local, state and national issues. From the posts urging action against Gov. Cuomo's policies to the one congratulating the local coach on his 400<sup>th</sup> win, they're all relevant and almost guaranteed to engage the interest of members. An excellent use of this media to communicate effectively with members.

**Judge 3:** In addition to the traditional education-, political-, and union-related items on this attractive Facebook page, much coverage is given to the weather – forecasts and reports from a professor of meteorology and the aftermath of the many winter storms that have hit this region. Nice site, also accessible from the union's website.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 08

**Class:**III

**Category:** Best Use of Social Media

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Twitter Page

**Publication/Website:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Twitter Page

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** <https://twitter.com/PatMedTeachers>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Another good page, but latest material is from Feb. 2015

**Judge 2:** This is an excellent use of Twitter to keep members up to date on important issues and events. From the tweet on school delays due to weather to information on an upcoming rally, the group communicates effectively with its members using this social media venue. One suggestion would be to minimize the retweets of the same information. The March 5 rally poster is repeated over and over and over.

**Judge 3:** This Twitter page is a great rallying point for those opposed to Common Core, teacher evaluation, APPR and Gov. Cuomo. The Tweets and retweets are timely and on point, as are the referrals to articles elsewhere, and relevant photos. Additionally, you can read the latest Tweets on the union's website and access the Twitter page from there. This is a great use of this social media resource.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

## Best Column/Blog

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**Category Code:** 09

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Column/Blog

**Local:** Lynbrook Teachers Association

**Name of Entry:** From the President's Desk

**Publication/Website:** LTA EXAMINER

**Issue Date:** June 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good analysis. Clever use of futuristic airport metaphor to compare effects of Common Core on students. Ends with call to action to dump Commissioner King.

**Judge 2:** I just love the metaphor of comparing the education system to a moving sidewalk at the airport that takes the students to the jetway for takeoff. Even though different passengers use the sidewalks in different ways, most eventually make it to the flight. It's a very interesting analogy that explains the writer's point of view in a clear and persuasive way that's sure to grab the attention of the reader.

**Judge 3:** In this fascinating president's column, the writer uses an airport's moving sidewalk as a metaphor for our system of education. There are, he points out, many ways to use a moving sidewalk to get to the plane, and you can still take the regular sidewalk if you choose. Common Core, he tells us, is not the only way to get students to the jetway so they're ready to take off. But he adds "It's like our architects have changed the time and location of the flight and we're being held accountable for the students not making it there because we drove them to the airport." Great writing and a great way to explain to the public the frustration teachers everywhere are feeling.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 09

**Class:** II

**Category:** Best Column/Blog

**Local:** Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

**Name of Entry:** Who Will Answer the Call?

**Publication/Website:** THE UNION SOUND

**Issue Date:** October 2014

**URL:**

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A very good president's message — uses quotes from famous Americans to frame needed participation by members to defend public education — generally, very stirring.

**Judge 2:** What an inspirational column! The writer uses a variety of historical quotes to convey a very strong message about the importance of every single qualified citizen voting in every single election in which they're eligible to vote. Along with the quotes, a variety of past and present crucial educational issues are cited that require immediate action. Taken together, the facts and the quotes not only add up to a very strong argument, they encourage a specific action. However, I believe the piece would have been even stronger if it were more concise.

**Judge 3:** Here is a well-written call to readers to treasure – and use – their right to vote. As anti-public-education forces seek to gain ground in Albany and in Washington, the writer of this president's column eloquently explains, in this excerpt, the need for everyone to get out and vote: "There is no more sitting on the sidelines watching the game. It has become a play-or-lose-everything sport. Fortunately, our team has 600,000 players, and if we put everyone on the field at once, we would be unstoppable. There is no more sitting on the sidelines watching someone else play the championship game." Excellent writing.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 09

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Column/Blog

**Local:** Arlington Teachers' Association

**Name of Entry:** THE EDUCATOR

**Publication/Website:** THE EDUCATOR

**Issue Date:** Sept/Oct/Dec 2014

**URL:** [arlingtonteachers.org](http://arlingtonteachers.org)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** "Not All Gifts Need Wrapping." A nice reminder about role of teachers in students' lives and why teachers go "the extra mile." "You have to care about politics" should have that effect on members.

**Judge 2:** A very touching and inspirational column about the ways a compassionate teacher can have a very positive impact on students during times of emotional stress. The article lays out the possible scenarios that may be affecting students' behavior and performance in a straightforward, yet sympathetic way, and then urges teachers to interact with these students in a helpful way. An excellent and very timely (holiday season) article.

**Judge 3:** The writer makes a good point in his pre-holiday president's column – aptly titled "Not All Gifts Need Wrapping." While members do a great job collecting gifts, food and other items for the neediest students and families, there are many students who are economically secure but emotionally needing some help. Children of divorce, those with hospitalized siblings and some with parents in rehab might benefit from an opportunity to talk with a caring adult, he suggests. Good topic, well done.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 09

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Column/Blog

**Local:** Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

**Name of Entry:** THE UNDERCURRENT blog

**Publication/Website:** The UNDERCURRENT

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.fascnewmemberblog.blogspot.com](http://www.fascnewmemberblog.blogspot.com)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** Very good advice for new members on career and personal planning provided by veteran educators.

**Judge 2:** What a wealth of important information this blog offers to new faculty members. From an admonition to plan the next 10 years of your career to a list of important phone numbers, it inspires, informs and encourages the newest members. Not only does the blog engage its audience, it urges a number of very specific actions. My only suggestion would be to make the entries shorter, and break up the text with photos, graphics, etc.

**Judge 3:** There is good, solid information here for new faculty members, mixed with some personal observations and asides. I think readers will find it useful and interesting but I wonder if new people would have the time to read it all. It's well written, but I would look to tighten it up a bit.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 09

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Column/Blog

**Local:** Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** Due Process, Explained

**Publication/Website:** Due Process 4 Teachers Blog

**Issue Date:** August 2014

**URL:** <http://www.dueprocess4teachers.blogspot.com>

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A wonderful, smart, heartfelt effective response to Whoopi Goldberg's bad comments on tenure.

**Judge 2:** This blog post is one of the best explanations I've ever seen about the importance of tenure for teachers. By framing it as a mock letter to Whoopi Goldberg, the writer is free to explain many very difficult concepts in a very simple way, as if speaking to a person who has little or no previous knowledge about the subject. The simple language makes it easy to read and understand, yet builds a very persuasive argument. My only suggestion would be to keep such blog entries shorter and more concise. I'm not sure Ms. Goldberg would have read all the way to the end.

**Judge 3:** This is a long and detailed but excellent explanation of tenure and due process, especially in its importance to "good teachers." It is valuable in part because it points up the frequent need to explain the importance of due process and how it works, even to people who consider themselves supporters of teachers and public education. Everyone could learn by reading this.

# NYSUT Communication Awards 2015 In-Service

**Category Code:** 09

**Class:** III

**Category:** Best Column/Blog

**Local:** Plainview-Old Bethpage Congress of Teachers

**Name of Entry:** A Teachable Moment

**Publication/Website:** Plainview Old Bethpage Congress of Teachers Blog

**Issue Date:**

**URL:** [www.pobct.org/ATM](http://www.pobct.org/ATM)

Judges' Comments:

**Judge 1:** A thoughtful reflection on how one teacher would exchange ideas with students about M. Brown grand jury decision.

**Judge 2:** Just in general, this blog is everything an effective blog should be. Each entry is short, concise and addresses just one topic. The Dec. 19 entry, "The Governor's Christmas Present to Teachers," is an excellent example. In just four paragraphs, the blogger lays out the governor's recent actions attacking teachers and their union, and urges the reader to take specific actions to fight these attacks.

**Judge 3:** The very prolific writer of this blog, the local president, has found a great vehicle through which he can comment on current issues affecting education and organized labor, to name a few. In his final post for 2014 he criticizes Gov. Cuomo for an opening shot across NYSUT's bow, describing the governor as follows: "Seething with anger for the unions that failed to support him, he's having a tantrum appropriate to his ego." Nice writing.