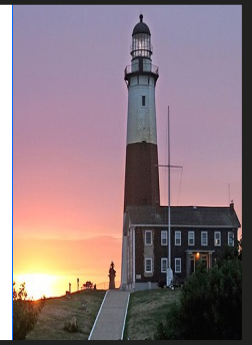




From the Lighthouse in the West to the Lighthouse in the East

THE BEACON

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk
Union Local 3037



President's Report **Thelma Shaw**

Volume 25 Issue 4

February 2012

Numbers don't always add up

Inside this issue:

As I celebrated the start of a new year at 12:01 on January 1, 2012, I reflected on many things. I thought about what this new year was going to mean, not only for me personally, but for our membership in general and for the future of Eastern Suffolk BOCES. In his public address, Governor Cuomo stated that, "Teachers' evaluations are key to cash. At the end of the day, no evaluations, no money." In addition, he focused on a new, cheaper pension package for future employees. He spoke of a new 401k style retirement plan or a state pension less lucrative than the current one.



All of this is front page news and on every station with national coverage. This only fuels the negativity that the general public is feeling about educators. All you have to do is look at the front page or open the paper, turn on the TV or listen to the radio.

Our pensions are a topic of conversation at least weekly, if not daily, it seems. Of course, the fact that "Dick or Jane" now need remedial courses at the college level because they weren't "taught" well enough in school makes headlines across the state.

There are discussions about pensions that should make each and every one of us stand up and take action. There are those who think that public pensions should mirror private ones; that all tiers should be taken away and there should just be one equal tier. Additionally, they think that taxpayers should have the right to vote for labor contracts in order for them to be passed.

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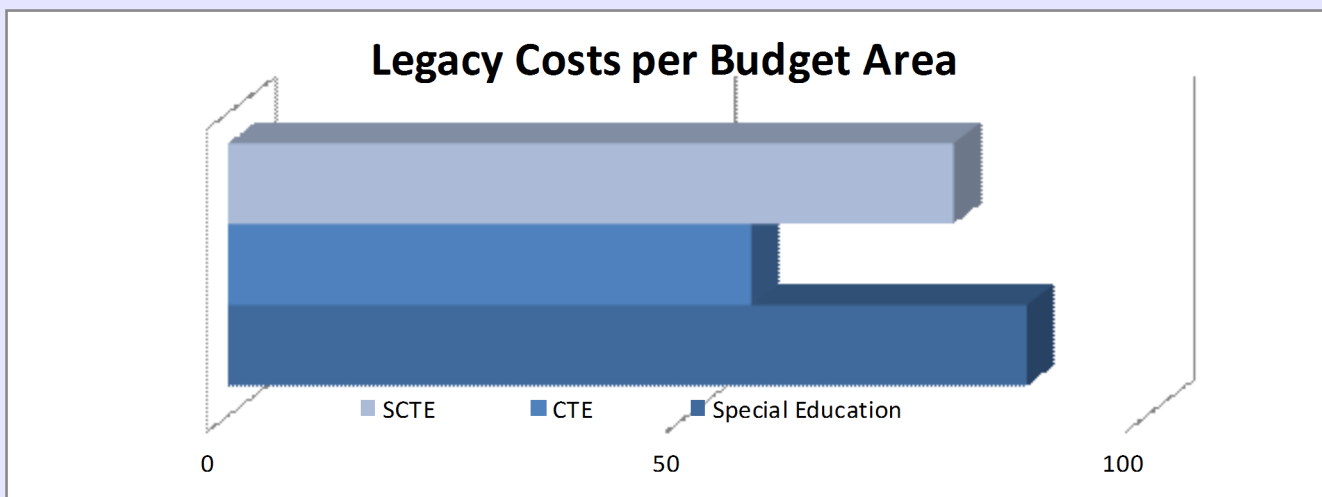
SED is Holding Education Hostage

Along with these facts, we are concerned with dictatorial tactics like the ones that state education commissioner John King is using.

By blocking millions in federal school improvement grants from reaching our local schools, our neediest students are being deprived of tutoring. AP classes are being reduced or cancelled across the state. The negative impacts are too myriad to list here. As a membership, we should be emailing our non-acceptance of this to the state Board of Regents.

Emails do work. A case in point is the recent successful exemption from the MTA payroll tax for school districts. The hard work, advocacy and determination of you, our members, and NYSUT helped make this a reality. To refresh your memory, the impact that this tax had on school districts and BOCES was enormous. It amounted to approximately .34 percent of an employer's payroll expense for each calendar quarter. With the 2 % tax cap in place for this year, this would have been the proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back." Kudos to NYSUT for putting their full lobbying efforts and influence behind the exemption. In addition, NYSUT has publicly addressed the budget that Governor Cuomo has proposed and continues to place the blame for the debacle that has surrounded the implementation of the new teacher evaluations on SED.

On that note, lets talk about the BOCES budget that is being presented to our districts. I attended the budget meeting on January 18th where the proposed budgets for special education, career and tech education, and special career education for the 2012 -2013 school year were presented. Attending these meetings for the past six years has been highly informative and quite the eye opener. The legacy costs of retirement and salaries that continue to grow each year are now currently responsible for 87.17% of the special education budget, 56.79% of the CTE budget and 79.03% of the SCE budget. This doesn't leave much room for the other pieces of the pie chart such as O&M and supplies and equipment. Remember, most of our staff is in the special education budget.



The number of members currently retiring is not enough to offset the loss of student enrollment.

Let's start with special education. Over the past 3 years, the total student enrollment has declined annually at an average of nearly 4%. The budget for the 2012 – 2013 school year will be built on a total enrollment of 1330 students, which is **55 students below our current enrollment**. This projection will once again have an impact on our staffing positions. About 37 positions in all areas combined in the BEES unit (from both the blue and yellow contracts) will be affected. Once again, we will be facing excessing of staff members. This includes teachers, itinerants, assistants and aides.

As we have established in the past, we will begin the process of identifying affected staff members in early spring. We don't have names yet, so while I understand the panic of being "low person on the totem pole," please don't ask or speculate. We truly don't know yet. There is always the hope that things get better or that some members may decide to retire between now and June 2012 (the agency is currently allowing members to waive their 18 month time frame for requesting retirement).

The proposed budget for 2012-2013 is for 70 less staff

William Floyd Learning Center to Close in June

Sadly, as part of the agency's plan to reduce costs to our districts and save money, the William Floyd LC will be closed in June. Currently, only 3 classes are using that building. This is a huge loss in my opinion. That program was a showcase for district based learning at its best. The staff in that building are attached to Sayville Academic Center and will be absorbed into that site based on seniority, or go into the August pool if there is an overage. Again, placements will be based on seniority.

KUDOS to Rob Becker and his staff for creating this budget. It will be difficult for us as a membership since there will be excessing. However, increases in tuition, services and other expenses were kept at rates that were nothing short of a miracle, especially when one considers all the challenges we face in education. It could have been much worse!

Career Education is being hit hard again

Career and technical programs have seen a reduction of students during the past 5 years. Two thirds of our students attend the PM sessions only. The budget for the 2012 – 2013 school year will be built on an enrollment of 1631. **That is 100 students less than we have this school year**. This year's budget was saved in part by the fact that the CTE programs had 97 adults registered. This helped offset costs and meet the enrollment projections. As everyone knows, it is very difficult to predict CTE enrollment. Unfortunately, as in special education, this budget and reduction in student projection will impact staff. Overall, we are looking at the loss of 24.5 members. Again, this can affect everyone - teachers, assistants and aides. CTE only had one teacher choose to retire and this also impacts the budget process.

Good News Bad News

Special career education has a little good news. They are holding their own and there is actually an increase of one student projected for the 2012- 2013 school year. They currently are at 458 students and will go to 459 for next year. Just remember, with the financial crisis that exists, we have to be cautious going forward. Historically, over the past 6 years, there has been a decrease in enrollment. We can only hope that the projected enrollment (or more) will be the actual one. Maintaining enrollment numbers is due in part to all the hard work that our members have done embedding academic standards and using academic curriculum in their courses. Currently 10 SCE classes have academic credit embedded in their curriculums.

Unfortunately, even with the enrollment up plus one, there will still be 8.5 staff members reduced. That is all positions, but the majority of this will be individual aides. This year saw a huge increase in the amount of individual aides that were requested in the CTE and SCE classes. As those students graduate or the district drops the request for that service, those positions are reduced. Again, we do not have any indication as of yet as to who this will affect. **Aides have agency wide seniority as do assistants.** When we get into early spring we will begin to look at our seniority lists carefully. If you would like your seniority number please send a request in writing to your area VP. We should be in receipt of our new lists by the 10th of February, so don't request it until after that date. The agency is in the process of doing these lists again so that they are as current as possible.

Please remember that before any member is called in for a meeting about a loss of a position, those lists are triple checked by all of us. Thank you to Dean Lucera and his staff for all the work that they did which enabled them to present an equitable budget to our districts - Not an easy task in these times.

BEE Informed

The BEACON and our website are valuable tools in which you can stay informed. It takes me hours to write the articles that you read here and to make them as factual and informative as possible for you, our members. It really saddens, and honestly, annoys me that I keep hearing "I don't read the BEACON or check out the website. " It is your loss and I hope that those of you who do read it tell your coworkers what great and informative tools they are missing out on.

This is an election year for Executive Board officers and delegates. Maybe you are one of those people who tell me that they never read the BEACON and could care less about the union. If you are one of those people, please do me one favor and **read this particular BEACON.**

Voting for the people who will be representing you for the next 2 years is IMPORTANT

These people will be the ones representing you with administration, as well as the people who will be negotiating the next round of contracts. Negotiating will take place at a time when all benefits are being scrutinized by everyone. Federal law covers union elections and procedures need to be strictly followed. It is your responsibility and obligation to make sure that when you receive your ballot that you fill it out and return it in the envelope provided. Yes, it will cost you a stamp, but it is an investment into your future.

While we have a blue contract that is in effect until June 2014, and a yellow contract in effect until June 2013, the new president and Executive Board will have their work cut out for them. Negotiating contracts in the current climate will be extremely different and difficult. Whether you believe it or not, we have benefit rich contracts that have accumulated over many years of negotiating and will, without a doubt, be "on the table" next time up. In addition, they will be overseeing the new APPR regulations that oversee evaluations and appeal processes.

Your ballots will be mailed to your home address currently on file with our union. If you have moved and not given your new mailing address to us, it is imperative that you do so now. Please write down any changes and interoffice them to our BEES office secretary, Linda Cardone. She is at TSP@BLC. I cannot stress how critical it is that the union have your current mailing address. Ballots WILL NOT BE given out via interoffice mail or hand delivered.

This BEACON contains bios of the candidates running for office. Their terms will be effective July 1, 2012. Read them and learn about their background. Candidates who are seeking election have the right to campaign. This must be scheduled after work hours. In addition, if a candidate chooses to put out a flyer introducing him or herself and stating his/her qualifications, this flyer CANNOT be put in BOCES staff mailboxes. In addition, do not ask a building representative or an officer to hand out your flyers. It is a candidate's responsibility to get the flyers out to our membership.

AS A UNION, WE DO NOT ENDORSE ANY OF THE CANDIDATES.

This is not a popularity contest or about how many teachers or para educators are going to be sitting on the Executive Board. This is all about the people who are QUALIFIED to do the job. Running for these positions takes a lot of dedication and commitment. It is not because the job is awful; it is about the time, family obligations, and other commitments that turn people away from running for these positions. It might be argued that no one in his or her right mind would want to be available on weekends, holidays, summers, evenings and just about anytime that a member has a problem. I'd rather think that their sense of service and dedication allows them to overcome the sacrifices necessary to effectively do the job. Therefore, the people who are running for any of the officer positions are willing to take on that responsibility in order to represent our current membership of just about 1400. So, if you read just one BEACON, make it this current one. Please read the article later on in this edition for the election details and guidelines.

LONG ISLAND TEACHERS BENEVOLENT FUND SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

will once again be available. Seniors who are graduating in June 2012 whose parents are members and who will be attending a post secondary institution on a full time basis may apply. During the past 5 years we have had a total of 21 winners. I expect to have the applications by February 6th. To receive an application, please email me at Beeshivepres@aol.com and include your name and building location in your request. I will interoffice you an application as soon as I get your request. Remember, these applications must be returned to me for my signature and they are time sensitive. Send them back to Thelma Shaw, TSP@BLC. Allow a few days for them to reach me. I then send them out to the LITBF.

Laws are changed or enacted, SED changes certifications and requirements and basically, the times that we live in make educators and education more accountable. It impacts all of us. You know what makes us different and special (no pun intended); what each and everyone of us "gives" to the students we work with. We all bring a little something different to the BO-CES table. Creativity, dedication, commitment and caring, to name a few. I for one, will miss sitting at that table with all of you next year. I know that the table will continue to be bountiful because all of the rest of you will be sitting at it. That is what makes Eastern Suffolk BOCES a special place to be, no matter what your job title. Thanks for the memories. Thanks for the good times and thank you for electing me for 6 years to serve as your president. It is a job I have cherished and have always strived to do my best.

The other day I received the best compliment ever. A member said to me, "You know what, Thelma? I never thought about your job title once you were elected. You have always been Thelma, president of the BEES. Never did I think of you as JUST a teacher assistant or JUST a para or any other TITLE, because you represent everyone the same way, fairly and in their best interest no matter what their title. That is the way it should be." I would ask that you all keep this in mind for elections. Elect the best candidate, not just the one with the best job TITLE. In closing,

I would like to end with one of my mantras.

I have been the kind of woman that when my feet hit the floor each morning, the devil says "Oh crap, she is up." Life is too short to wake up with regrets, so love the people who treat you right. Even love the people who don't because you are the better person and you can. Believe everything happens for a reason.

If you get a second chance in life

If it changes your life

Forgive quickly

would be easy.just worth it.



grab it with both hands.

let it.

no one ever said life

Life these days at ESB is not easy, but folks, it is definitely worth it.



Executive Vice President

Pat Copertino

Just a Couple of Clicks Can Make a BIG Difference

We live in a very busy fast paced world with many entities pulling at us for our time and attention. We are bombarded with half-truths, well-tailored political statements, and statistical quotes that are used to persuade, but do not always share the whole story. It becomes a great deal of noise and adds stress to our already full lives. The exhaustion that comes with feeling you must defend yourself as a supporter of public education and what is right for our children can be depressing. It can make you want to shut it all off and retreat.

Whether it is from Dr. Oz, psychological journals or the sensible person in your lives, you know that retreating is not the answer, but action is. Whether it be exercise or accomplishing a task on your checklist, you feel better.

For the last six years of writing these articles I have asked you to take small attainable actions for the greater good or just to keep yourself "In the Know." This will require very little time and truly just a couple of clicks. We need the entire New York State Community of taxpayers clicking with us. Please share this with your families, neighbors, administrators and anyone who has an interest in insuring our tax dollars go to the children. Even though it is a NYSUT supported petition, any New Yorker can sign.

From www.nysut.org



Sign this petition to secure state aid for schools

Please act now in support of NYSUT's urgent campaign to increase state aid restorations. The petition demands that \$250 million set aside for competitive grants to schools should instead be fairly distributed according to the state aid formula. The petition launched this week already has more than 4,600 signatures.

The executive budget proposal includes only \$805 million more for schools, a partial restoration of the \$1.3 billion state aid cut last year. Districts also must contend with a tax cap that crushes their ability to raise revenue at home. Redirecting the \$250 million would provide additional funding toward the goal of restoring the \$1.3 billion school aid cut imposed last year.

Sign the petition,

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/1846/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=9252

Your support and solidarity for New York State Public Education Systems puts our children on top.



First Vice President

Ray Stenberg

The Power of Unionism

This is the time of year when politics shrouds us with feelings of uncertainty. We don't know who or what to believe as the fireworks explode in our faces. Constant changes in the rules which, incidentally, are being designed to harm us more than they are to help us, make our jobs more and more difficult. The barrage of anti-teacher attacks boggle my mind. It has gotten to the point that when I meet somebody who asks me what I do for a living, I don't tell them I'm a teacher because I fear that our conversation will lead to an argument. In fact, at a recent family function, the "education argument" became so heated that we have agreed to no longer discuss public schools, unions, and pensions. Fortunately, our good friends at Newsday are always there to support us.

Folks, it is bad out there. There are strong forces that are trying to dismantle decades of hard work. Governors throughout this country are banding together and trying to pass legislation that will greatly harm us. Many of them are trying to get rid of unions altogether by passing right to work legislation which will have a significant impact on millions of our union brothers and sisters across the nation. Just recently, Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels along with an extreme group of Republican legislators, did just that. After a six minute hearing allowing no amendments and no debate, the bill was approved. In New Hampshire, the Republican House Speaker passed right to work legislation as his first order of business of the new year. Similar bills are quickly getting attention as the issue has moved into the national arena. Mitt Romney recently said, "And the right course politically at this stage is to have states carry out their own right to work legislation." Remember, right to work essentially means right to no union.

Following Dr. King's Legacy

We recently celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday, a man whose beliefs inspire me today. Dr. King gave voice to the principle that civil rights and workers rights are inseparable; that to deny one is to do injury to the other. His social commentary speaks directly to the motives of today's anti-union movement. In 1961, he said, "In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work.'" It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone. Wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer and there are no civil rights."

Dr. King would be appalled at the behavior of many of our leaders. However, on the other hand, he would be proud of the people of Wisconsin who have united together to begin the process of recalling Governor Scott Walker and four Republican State Senators. These villains essentially voted to eliminate the unions in their state. More than 1.9 million signatures were collected in just over two months. 1 out of every 4 eligible voters in Wisconsin signed a petition to get this Governor out of office. Way to go, Wisconsin!

Here in New York, we have a Governor who wants to create a Tier 6 for every public pension system in the state. Under this plan, a worker cannot retire without penalty until the age of 65 and they must contribute to their pensions for their entire career. Can you imagine having to teach for 45 years or being a police officer or a fireman chasing criminals or pulling fire hoses at the age of 65? What will Tier 7 be? Retire when you're 72.

Fortunately, we do have some friends in Albany.

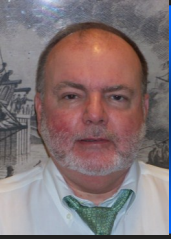
Tom DiNapoli, the State Comptroller whom we helped get elected, spoke out against the creation of a Tier 6. He believes that it does not make fiscal sense whatsoever. Let's hope the Legislators analyze the few pros and many cons of such drastic changes in retirement benefits. What's happening throughout our country is clearly meant to divide us as a nation and cause major heartaches for millions of middle class, hard working American citizens.

We need to take action. Our weapon is our vote. We need to get out there and elect people who will help us, not hurt us. Watch the news, read the papers, surf the web. Find out the candidates' positions on labor and education issues and reflect on how these positions can harm you. As we have seen, they have harmed many of our colleagues here at Eastern Suffolk BOCES who no longer have jobs, and who are in danger of losing them in the very near future. There are major elections coming up. This year, you will be voting for the President of the United States as well as the BEES Executive Board. You'll also be supporting your local school district budgets on May 15th. Remember, one election is just as important as the other. Take the time to vote. There is no excuse!

**BOCES LOBBYING DAY
has been moved to
Tuesday March 6th, 2012**

BEES members will be granted a Professional Day for attending the annual lobbying trip up to Albany, A full breakfast is provided upon arrival in Albany and your local union will reimburse you for lunch.

Email Ray at rstenber@esboces.org
to guarantee yourself a spot on the list.



Freeing Freedoms

Greetings, my sisters and brothers. As we turn the page on 2011 and move into the New Year, a plethora of challenges and opportunities lay before us. On the national level, we continue to face assaults on teachers' unions from groups ranging from hedge fund billionaires, to politicians on both sides of the aisle. Some have compared teachers' union leaders to Saddam Hussein loyalists and South African apartheid officials. Leveling such charges against our union, which has stood at the forefront of the movements to end racism, promote social justice, and empower women, is galling to say the least.

The hedge fund billionaires put forth the argument that teacher unions only serve teacher self interest and collective bargaining rights should be lost. Is it not the reality that it is in the self interest of very wealthy individuals to be taxed at a higher rate to fund projects for the public good, including schools? The legendary conservative president Ronald Reagan stated in his 1980 Labor Day speech: **"Where free unions and collective bargaining are forbidden, freedom is lost?"** If President Reagan's statement was true with regards to then communist countries, how much truer is it for the United States!

The great Albert Shanker, head of the AFT from 1974-1997, strongly believed that unionized teachers can educate better if we were part of the coalition fighting to reduce income inequality, improve housing, and provide appropriate health care for children. It is good common sense that children learn better with a decent meal, and that students with special needs improve with adaptive physical aids and early intervention to reduce the severity of their handicaps.



Such things are at the core of why teacher unions are such an active part of the broader labor movement in helping to rebuild the middle class. It is an essential part of who we are as an organization, our belief in the future, and our dedication to our children. The stakes could not be higher. Nothing less than the future of our nation is on the line. Brothers and sisters, if there ever was a fight worth making, this is it. Glad I'm around. I wouldn't miss it for the world!

As a final comment, I want to switch back from the global to the local. From a BEES union perspective, we have our upcoming elections. After long and invaluable service, Thelma will be retiring. In July, a new Executive Board will be in place to guide our union. Inevitably, there will be new perspectives, different approaches and changing view points. I hope to be a part of that change. My friends, please remember that whatever the outcome of the election, the new board will need your continued solidarity, strength and support that you have all generously given us over the years.

Thank you all. I close, as I always do, with my belief, "Unity and Strength!"



Area V.P. Para Educators

Gail Reissman

Personal Leave Criteria

As you know, this is an election year and several positions are being contested. When you receive your ballot, please take a few minutes to fill it out and return it. I know how busy we all are, but read the biographies and make an informed decision.

Sometimes we feel it doesn't matter.....believe me, your vote is very important and every one matters. Thank you for your continuing support and the opportunity to serve you for the past 6 years.

Below is our most recent Para Pro Practice agreement about taking personal leave.

Personal Leave Criteria for Educational Purposes

A one semester Educational Leave will be granted in accordance with the contract.

If additional time is needed to complete educational requirements, the Agency will determine whether to grant an additional Personal Leave for educational purposes according to the following criteria:

1. Three (3) years of excellent attendance (average of no more than seven (7) sick days taken for each of three (3) years).
2. Overall average or above average, or ratings of *effective* or *highly effective*, end of the year evaluations for certificated staff; or all Satisfactory (S) evaluations for non-certificated staff.
3. Tenured for certificated staff; or completed five (5) year probation period for non-certificated staff.
4. Recommendation of immediate supervisor on performance and impact of leave on the program.
5. Pursuing a degree in an associated educational field.



Recording Secretary

Linda Bufalo

For the Record

It's difficult to believe that we are approaching mid-year! The 2011/2012 school year has been busy for all, including the Executive Board. As this is an Election Year, I would like to describe my position as the Recording Secretary for the BEES.

I have the responsibility to keep record of all business transacted at meetings for the Executive Board, Representative Council, General Meetings, and any special or emergency meetings called by the Board or the President. I also maintain a record of all bylaws and constitutional amendments proposed and/or adopted at any of the aforementioned meetings.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve our local.

As always, I am confident that this will be a productive year.

ESBOCES Self-Knowledge Quiz

Can you complete the follow information about yourself ?

I am in Tier _____

I am a member of the NYS _____ Retirement System.

The website for my retirement system is --- _____

The phone number for my retirement system is _____

I have _____ years of service in the retirement system.

I was hired by BOCES on _____ (M/D/Y).

I have _____ total years of service with BOCES.

I have _____ continuous years of service with BOCES.

My first eligibility for retirement begins on _____ (M/D/Y)

and expires on _____ (M/D/Y).

[New York State and Local Employees Retirement System](#)

[New York State Teachers Retirement System](#)

Know this information and Keep it up to date!



It Benefits You to Know

I hope everyone had a chance to enjoy the holiday recess. By the time you read this, the year will be halfway over and the time to elect your executive board members will be fast approaching. In these difficult times, we need to show unity and strength, please take the time to know the candidates and vote.

Below is information from two previous articles related to sick leave. I cannot stress enough the importance of maintaining an accumulation of sick days. Many of our benefits depend on our being "on payroll." If you can't work and aren't receiving sick leave pay from BOCES, then you are not "on payroll" and will lose those benefits we have worked so hard to achieve. Some of the benefits that depend on being "on payroll" are: health insurance, dental insurance and life insurance, and seniority.

Sick Leave Days

Under either the Teacher's contract or the Para Educator's contract, you receive a given number of sick leave days per year and a given number of personal days. Both contracts allow you to add unused personal days to your accumulated sick days and you can accumulate up to 200 unused sick days for the purpose of contractual benefits. BOCES does not keep track of days accumulated over the 200.

What can you do with them?

The obvious – use them when you're sick. However, there are a few things to be aware of. In both the Teacher's contract and the Para Educator's contract, you might, in specific circumstances, be asked to document your absences. Failure to provide proper documentation could result in being docked one or two days' pay. Please read your contract so you understand when and by whom you can be asked for documentation.

Ask to have them converted to personal days in the event of a serious illness of family member, or other extraordinary and /or unusual event. You can also ask to have personal days converted to sick days should extenuating circumstances arise.

Contribute one to the Sick Leave Bank. This is a one time contribution unless the bank goes below 40 days (which it never has in its 15 year history). You may request to borrow days in the Sick Leave Bank if you are a member and have a prolonged illness or injury and have used all of your sick days. You must be out 20 consecutive days before you can access the Sick Leave Bank. Additionally, if you didn't join the Sick Leave Bank when first eligible, you will have to wait one year from the time of your enrollment to be able to access the Sick Leave Bank. This is only a brief overview of three pages of contract language relating to the Sick Leave Bank. Please read your contract so you fully understand how it works.

Why should you accumulate sick days?

You can use them for retirement/terminal leave. The number of days you can be paid for depends on your contract and when you were hired. Taking retirement/terminal leave is a very involved and complicated. You should be planning for this well in advance, in fact most people would benefit greatly by having a professional assist them in this planning.

You can use them to cover the 90 days until disability starts. Yes, you have to be out 90 consecutive days before you are eligible for disability. Even if you are a member of the Sick Leave Bank, you will still need 20 consecutive school days before that takes effect and you will still have to pay back the borrowed days.

Under the Teacher's contract you have two other provisions:

You can use them to collect excess pay. If you are excessed, you can collect up to 60 days pay. You will collect biweekly paychecks until you have used a maximum of 60 days pay. Not only does this provide you with money for almost 3 months, but it extends your benefits for the same period of time.

You can sell back up to 15 unused sick days from the current year's entitlement once you have over 90 accumulated days. You must provide written notice to Human Resources by May 1.

Note: The guidelines for membership, administration, and use of the sick bank are in your contract. Please read them so you are aware of how to use this contractual benefit.

In my opinion, the long term gains of accumulating sick days far outweighs the short term gains of using them, (and dare I say abusing them) as quickly as you are given them.

Sick Leave Follow-up

After my article last month, there have been several questions about how the sick bank works.

1. *If I find out I am going to be out a long time, can I join the sick bank?*

Yes, you can join the sick bank any time. HOWEVER, if you join after the first two months of employment you will have to **wait one year** before being eligible to use it.

2. *How come I have to use my sick days up and then wait 20 days to use the sick bank?*

You don't. Any sick days you use would count as part of the 20 days. Let's say you have 20 days and you are out with a prolonged illness or injury. You would get paid for those 20 days and on the 21st day, you could begin borrowing from the sick bank. If you only had 19 sick days you would not be paid for the 20th day out, but on the 21st day, you could begin borrowing from the sick bank. If you have more than 20 sick days accumulated, you must use them first before accessing the sick bank, and then you could begin borrowing from the sick bank.

3. *Why can't I use the sick bank a few days at a time?*

You cannot use the sick bank like that because the contract language, which binds BOCES and the Union, says you can't. Approximately 12 years ago, the guideline were negotiated and first written into our contracts (Yellow and Blue). Since that time, the contract language has been that, "Approved sick leave from the Bank will not begin coverage until the individual's accumulated sick leave is exhausted or the twenty-first working day, whichever occurs later."

4. *If I can use the sick bank when I'm sick for a long time. won't it run out of days?*

No. There are two reasons why. First, you are only borrowing days from the sick leave bank. You have to pay them back – 30% of your accrued sick days at the beginning of each year. Second, you can only access the sick leave bank until you are eligible for disability benefits – approximately 90 days from your last day worked.

Final Year's Salary or Final Average Salary

Final year's salary is what's written in both contracts for calculating your terminal leave. Final year's salary is just that, the number that is on the Salary Agreement you receive each school year. Final average salary is what is used to determine your retirement pay. Put simply* final average salary could include monies other than your contract salary. It could include pay received during your FAS years from such things as summer school, adult ed., and mentor teacher.

*I really do mean simply. You need to call your retirement system to ask what is eligible and what isn't, as well as how your FAS is calculated.

Retiring with Health Insurance

If you are currently being covered by your spouse's health insurance, either because you have taken the health insurance sell-back waiver or because you are a para educator hired after July 1, 1992, and are retiring this year, you need to contact human resources two months before your retirement date and evaluate switching to health insurance coverage. Once you are retired, you cannot pick up health insurance through BOCES. Should your spouse lose their health insurance or pass away and you do not have your own health insurance policy, you will be without coverage.

Your Retirement

Have you created an online retirement system access account? The NYS Employees' Retirement System has *Retirement Online* (<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/index.htm>) and the NYS Teacher's Retirement System has *My NYSTRS* (<http://www.nystrs.org/>). Both will provide you access to your account and a wealth of information about retirement. You can even sign up for newsletters that will send you current changes and info. Hopefully you have scheduled your retirement counseling. If not, and you are within five years of retirement you should schedule a session by calling – 1-800-348-7298 ext. 6270 if you are in the NYSTRS or – 1-866-805-0990 if you are in the NYSERS.

Retirement Filing Period Change

The NYSERS (New York State Employees' Retirement System) has changed the minimum number of days an application has to be filed on from 30 days to 15 days. This does not affect the time requirements for ESB or members in the NYSTRS. This change only affects our aides in the Employees' Retirement System.

Remember, as in everything that is important – ***KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING***

You can contact me at beesvpcb@optonline.net or call 244-5821.



Area V.P. Career and Technical Education

Fran Nilsen

Promoting our Programs

Now that we start February, visitors day and open house are almost upon us. I appeal to everyone that works for Eastern Suffolk BOCES to promote all of our programs. If you can put an open house flier on the back of your vehicle (use the blue painters tape), it might attract just one more student. We need positive exposure on all fronts. As most of us taxpayers know, all the school districts are tightening their belts.

In December, Rob Vanbrunt helped start a line of BOCES gear as a Skills USA fundraiser. I bought a few last year and can attest that they are good quality items, that people will notice. In order to keep our student numbers up and our co-workers employed, if there is anything you can do to attract more students to our programs, then please do it!

We cannot just sit back and expect things to happen. I went out to a couple of home schools with Jen MacDevitt and Linda Rogers. Parents want to see and hear from us. Students also go to these presentations. All the students that I have seen at these information sessions have been articulate and excellent presenters. This is the time of year where the students are starting to prepare their schedules for next year. Let's look at the big picture here and encourage high school students to at least consider our programs. If you see open house fliers, please don't let them just sit in your building. Staple them to a telephone pole. These are dated items, so use them up! Lets all work on promoting our programs.



Area V.P. Special Career Education

Joe Postiglione

Come See What We Do

Let me start by first welcoming Frank Dono to the staff at ICC. Frank transferred from the Jefferson Academic Center to take the Baking position at ICC.

Hopefully you are well aware that this is an election year for the executive board. Ballots are being mailed out March 1st. If your address has changed, be sure to update it through your building rep. Your ballot must be postmarked by March 15th. This is your chance to have your voice heard.

This is the time of year when tours start coming through the buildings. Visitors' day and Open House are just around the corner. All we hear is doom and gloom from the state. We know we are in for a rough ride. This is all the more reason to work even harder to promote our programs. We must put our best face forward. If a tour comes through your building, take a few minutes to welcome the visitors into your room. Let them see the wonderful things we do with our students. You have all heard me say this before, but remember, no one is going to work as hard as we do to promote our programs. The job you save might be your own!

The Ballots Are Coming-March 1, 2012

INVEST in YOUR FUTURE and VOTE

Candidates for Executive Office
All Union Members May Vote

President	Pat Copertino	
Executive Vice-President	(Choose 1) James Beck	Joe Postiglione
First Vice President	Ray Stenberg	
Treasurer	Michelle Tinter	
Membership Secretary	Marje Strawbridge	
Benefits Officer	Bob Love	
Recording Secretary	(Choose1) Robert Bayley	Linda Bufalo

Candidates for Area V.P. ~Vote **ONLY** for Your Area

CTE/SCE	Fran Nilsen	
Itinerants	Lisa Reilly	
Para-Educators	(choose 1) Mary Longo	Gail Reissman
Special Ed Teachers	Asha Shaw	

The following are delegate candidates for AFT:

Robert Love Jr.~ Luke Mahoney~ Gail Reissman~ Alan Rios~ Victoria Schwartz

The following are delegate candidates for NYSUT:

Robert Love Jr.~ Luke Mahoney~ Gail Reissman~ Alan Rios

Victoria Schwartz~ Ray Stenberg

Ballots must be returned and Postmarked no later then March 15th



Union President (Vote for one)

Patricia R. Copertino

Current Assignment: ES BOCES CTE/SCE Curriculum Teacher

Work Experience: Employed as an educator since January 1982, 21 at ES BOCES, 20 year in various classroom settings. Positions included Elementary (ED, Mixed Ability), Tourettes Program, High School Resource and Self-Contained, Summer Coordinator/Supervisor, SETRC Trainer, Staff Developer, District Consultant and Presenter, 10 years Curriculum Teacher

Related Professional Experience: Career-long involvement in committees and activities that promote school improvement, curriculum development, behavior management, leadership and excellence in teaching

Union Participation: 6 years as Executive Vice President, BEES Evaluation Committee, Negotiations Committee, 2008 Blue Contract Negotiations Team, Budget Committee Chairperson, Building Representative, Building Rep. Trainer, AFT and NYSUT Delegate, Elementary Divisional SDM, Central SDM, Special Education Task Force, Teacher Pro Practice Committee, Constitution Committee, as well as representing the constituents at ED 22 Meetings, NYSUT Representative Assembly, The AFT Convention, BOCES Leadership Conferences NYSUT Peer Review, and NYSUT APPR Review



First Vice President (Vote for one)

Ray Stendberg (Incumbent)

For the last six years I have been fortunate enough to sit on the BEES Executive Board as your First Vice-President. The E-Board continues to function as a team of dedicated individuals who devote themselves to the ever-changing needs of the union and its members. We always try to do the best we can to ensure that our union rights are protected and that our benefits remain solvent.

Here, at BOCES, I continue to work as a teacher in the Department of Special Education. I currently sit on several agency-wide committees, including the AFG Planning Team, the Strategic Planning Council and the Instructional Succession Planning Team. I co-chair the Professional Practices Committee for the blue contract and I am one of the BEES members assigned to the Special Education SDM. In Albany, I continue to represent you as a member of the Committee of 100, which is the NYSUT Political Action Team. I recently began my third term as a delegate to the NY State Teachers Retirement System. With your support, I am hoping to be able to continue on as a NYSUT, AFT, and NEA Delegate.

I am extremely passionate about our union and I'm looking forward to fighting some of the most vicious attacks that we have seen in decades.

Executive Vice President (Vote for one)



James Beck

Current Assignment: Special Education Teacher, Sagamore at BAC.

Work Experience: 24 years as an educator, 23 at ES BOCES, 24 in the classroom. Positions included 7th and 8th grade classroom teacher (Regular Ed Junior HS, Brooklyn NY), 2 years as a Teacher Assistant (Sagamore Program) and 22 years as a classroom Special Ed Teacher. 5 Years as the Chief Examiner for the GED (Adult Ed) ES BOCES. Prior to my career in education. I worked in our family business, Beck General Tire, for 6 years. I also worked for Confirmed Courier in Manhattan, working with disadvantaged youth, and 3 years with Jamaica Electroplating in Jamaica, Queens.

Related Professional Experience: Throughout my career I have always been involved in various committees that enhance our school programs. Within my building some of these committees have included, but are not limited to, Shared Decision Making, Behavior Management, Level 3 Reward, Graduation, IEP Users Group, Middle States Compliance, Interview Committee, and Social Studies (both building and agency).

Union Participation: Area Vice President for Special Education, Building Representative, NYSUT Delegate, Central SDM, Special Education Task Force, Safety Committee, NYSUT Delegate and Representative Assembly, BOCES Leadership Conferences, BEES Budget Committee.



Joseph Postiglione

I am seeking your support in the coming election for the position of Executive Vice President. I have been employed by the agency for 28 years, serving as the Area Vice President for Special Career Education for the past 4 years. Prior to my current position I represented the Islip Career Center as the teacher union representative for 4 years.

Before coming to Eastern Suffolk BOCES, I was the union representative for the Teacher Assistants at what is now Western Suffolk BOCES. I was employed there for 7 ½ years as a special education Teacher Assistant. Over the past 28 years, I have served on many committees including Participatory Management, Public Relations on the building and divisional level, the Special Career Education Task Force, as well as the Special Career Education Restructuring Committee and Shared Decision Making as a teacher representative before becoming the union representative on the committee.

Over the past 28 years, I have become known as a person who goes over and above the call of duty and is outspoken when issues arise that will have an impact on the students in our programs, as well as protecting the rights of our BEES members. During my tenure as a building representative and Area Vice President. I have built relationships of mutual respect and cooperation with the administrations on a building and divisional levels. I am regarded from all this as a staff member with valuable opinions. Serving on the Bees Executive Board for the past 4 years, I have learned a lot. I feel I am ready to take on the responsibilities of Executive Vice President and ask you for your support.



Contractual Benefits Officer (*Vote for one*)

Bob Love (Incumbent)

I am running again for Contractual Benefits Officer. I've been a BOCES employee for over 25 years.

I've been in the classroom as an; Academic teacher, Vocational teacher, Paraprofessional, and currently work as a CTE Academic teacher.

Over the last quarter century I have represented you, our members, as a Building Representative, an Area Vice President, and for the past eight years as the Contractual Benefits Officer. As the Benefits Officer, I have been able to help and advise several of you personally, some of you through the various seminars the union has conducted, and hopefully, many of you through my articles in the BEACON.

I currently sit on the Safety Committee and the Child Nutrition Wellness Committee. I have attended, on the behalf of the BEES, NYSUT's Health and Safety conferences, NYSUT's Member Benefits conferences and the NYSUT's BOCES Leadership conferences.

I am looking forward to another two years of assisting you all with understand our contractual benefit rights.



Membership Secretary (*Vote for one*)

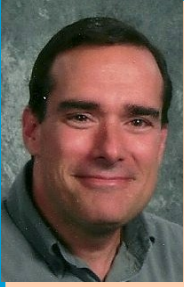
Marje Strawbridge (Incumbent)

This is my 22nd year with BOCES; right now I am working at WHBLC. I have served as a Para educator representative for five years, social chairperson for two years, and as the membership secretary for the past six years. I also am a member of Divisional SDM and an AFT and NYSUT delegate attending ED meetings and participation in Representative Assembly Conferences. I have had the pleasure of attending NYSUT and AFT conferences.

Through the years I have always tried to be involved and have been an active member of our union. My past and present experience and my willingness to serve you will hopefully get your vote as membership secretary.

Thank you and please remember to vote.

Recording Secretary *(Vote for one)*



Robert Bayley

I began my teaching career in 1982 as an infant/toddler teacher at the Shield Institute in Flushing, New York. After two years, I then worked as an infant/toddler teacher at a program through North Shore University Hospital. I began my BOCES career in 1989, and have worked over the years at Westhampton Beach, the St. Charles Learning Center, the North Country Learning Center, and presently the Brookhaven Learning Center.

During the past 4 years, I have served as the Building Representative at BLC, and have been a member of the SDM Building Committee. Throughout my years at BOCES, I have also served on numerous committees at different levels. In these challenging economic and political times, I look forward to having the opportunity to serve our union membership through a position on our Executive Board. I thank you for your consideration.



Linda Bufalo (Incumbent)

I have been an active union leader for the past 9 years, and a Para-Educator at the Westhampton Beach Learning center for 17 years. It has been an honor to serve our membership as Recording Secretary for the BEES Executive Board. The knowledge I have acquired by working with an experienced and professional team has been invaluable to me. Serving the local as a strong union leader has always been my goal. As an Executive Officer for 4 years and a Building Representative for 5 years, I have participated in various committees and attended workshops to enhance my knowledge of the union and the structure of ESBOCES. Committees and conferences include:

- *Special Ed. Dept. Shared Decision Making
- *Para-Educator Professional Practices Committee
- *AFT-PSRP (National Conferences)
- *NYSUT-SRP (State Conferences)
- *NYSUT-SRP (Local Conferences)
- *AFT and NYSUT Delegate
- *Building Health and Safety Committee
- *Building Shared Decision Making
- *Contract Negotiations Sub-Committee
- *Currently I also hold the office of Recording Secretary for the Long Island Council of Paraprofessionals (LICOP), an organization of para leaders from Suffolk County representing teacher aides and teaching assistants.

These are changing times. I offer consistency and proficiency as an experienced Executive Board member, as well as unwavering support to the entire membership. I hope to represent and serve our local for another term. Thank you for your consideration.

Treasurer (Vote for one)



Michelle Tinter (Incumbent)

I have worked as a Para-Educator at Westhampton Beach Learning Center for the past 11 years, as well as a Para-Union Representative for 3 years prior to my four year term as Treasurer. Along with my experiences as Treasurer for the last four years, I am most qualified for my position with past experiences consisting of employment for a Fortune 500 company on Wall Street, as an Assistant to the Chief Financial Officer, as well as the Executive Vice President of the Foreign Investments Department. Upon attending the New York Institute of Finance, I worked hand-in-hand with individual brokers for large investment firms. Leaving my employment on Wall Street, I worked for a large insurance agency on Long Island. As a liaison for over 2000 clients, my duties consisted of accounts payable and receivables, as well as bi-weekly payroll.

My past experiences, as well as my future interest in running as an incumbent for Treasurer on the Executive Board, my continued dedication remains the same. I would be honored to represent you as Treasurer for a third term on the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk Executive Board.

Area Vice Presidents

You can only vote for the Vice President representing your tenure area

Area Vice President for Special Education (Vote for one)



Asha Shaw

I began working for E.S. BOCES in 1999 as a para-educator. While attending college at SUNY New Paltz, I worked as a substitute in many of the BOCES technical and academic centers. In 2004, I began student teaching at what was then the William Floyd Learning Center, while attending Dowling College for my masters degree in education. Shortly after completing my student teaching requirements I was hired to the program as a teacher assistant.

Upon completing my masters degree in 2005, I was hired to William Floyd as a full time teacher. Shortly there after I took an interest in the union and decided to run for the position of union representative for the building. I served two terms as my buildings union rep. and was then appointed to the executive board as grievance officer. During my time as grievance officer I learned much about the union and our contract language. After working at BOCES for over a decade and holding many different positions, I have developed an understanding of the work that we do from many perspectives.

I am eager to continue my work with the union and I look forward to serving our local in whatever capacity I can.

Area Vice President, Aides and Assistants *(Vote for one)*



Mary Longo

I have been with BOCES for fifteen years, working in a range of programs within tech and special education. I understand the diversity and challenges for the individual programs. I have been a part of the many changes the various BOCES programs have undergone, and I can identify with the uncertainty and anxiety that accompanies these changes.

Prior to working for BOCES, I worked for an organization through which I developed my professional and time management skills. I was handling problems in a constructive manner. I would assure that employees attained positive results. I oversaw the fair and equal treatment of all employees.

Two years ago, I decided to become more involved with the union. I ran for, and was elected to the building rep position at Bellport Academic Center. I seriously take on the responsibility of representing the para educators in my building, and I do all that I can to assure our rights under the contract. I have become familiar with the workings of our union as well as the contents of our contract and pro-practice agreements. I am a member of our schools' SDM committee and enjoy being an active part of that decision making team.

I plan on being involved in this organization for many years and I want to insure that our benefits are secured and our futures protected.



Gail Reissman (Incumbent)

I began my union career for the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk as a Building Rep. serving for more than 10 years in that position. I was then elected as Recording Secretary to the Executive Board before being elected as Area Vice President for the Aides and Assistants in 2006. As current Area Vice President, I represent us on the following committees: Central SDM, Career and Tech Ed. SDM, Health and Safety Committee, Wellness Committee, BEES Evaluation Committee, Succession Planning Committee, Employees Awards Committee, and the Para Professional Practices Committee. I am also a delegate to the Representative Assembly. As part of the negotiation team for the 2006 – 2011 contracts I gained valuable knowledge of the negotiation process.

Locally, I am President of the Long Island Council of Paraprofessionals bringing together leaders of other unions to discuss common issues.

This year I had the honor of being appointed to the New York State School Related Professional Advisory Committee and am Co-Vice-Chair of Communication and Public Relations. As a member of that committee I represent all Suffolk County SRP's giving me the opportunity to bring our concerns to the State level. This also gives me the opportunity to meet several times a year with the Suffolk County Regional Director at NYSUT headquarters in Hauppauge to discuss the needs of Suffolk County SRP's and plan for the future.

I look forward to continue serving you. In Solidarity

Area Vice President for Related Services (*Vote for one*)

Lisa Reilly (Incumbent)



Well it's that time of the year that the union asks all our fellow constituents who they want to represent them for the next two years. I am presently working at the Jefferson Academic Center. I have been the area rep in SAS for the last 20 years. New this year will be that the position is now including all itinerants and speech pathologists.

During that time I have handled many issues that pertained to the social workers, psychologists and guidance counselors. I have met with various administrators and have been involved with many situations involving hiring, grievances, and unfair work practices. It is your turn to choose again for the right candidate to represent you. If there are any questions or concerns please contact me at Jefferson Academic Center 476-0564.



Area Vice President for Special and Career Education

(*Vote for one*)

Fran Nilsen (Incumbent)

This is or could be my 3rd term if you elect me in again. I am running for Area VP to CTE again. I started my 22nd year with BOCES this year. I have been the building rep to BTC for 4 years and have been the area VP for the last four years. I started as a teacher asst. in carpentry. Then took over the Drafting class and ran that for 11 years. When the teacher I started with retired, I then applied and took over Carpentry class at BTC for the past 6 years.

I am on central SDM, which until this year was CTE-SDM, Teacher pro- practice, and I have gone to Albany on lobby day a few times. I was a leader teacher and have represented BOCES in Washington DC, Saratoga, and Japan. I am located at HB Ward in the AM and BTC in the PM.

The New Year has begun, and there will be much activity ahead for all. A computer workshop will be offered, through Senior Net, on Thursday, March 1, 2012, at the BEES Office. The workshop will be preceded by a short Retiree Chapter meeting, beginning at 9:45 AM. Additionally, we are planning a Spring field trip, details of which will be available when arrangements are firm. There are many Retirees who do not choose to receive e-mails, so it would be helpful if you can communicate this information to them, particularly if they do not access to a computer. Aside from e-mail contact, traditional communication will be madethrough the postal service.

Through Retiree Council #22 Newsletter, you should receive notification of future meetings related to Retiree issues. There is also a field trip planned, through the Council, for Thursday, May 17, 2012, to West Point, that will include lunch, followed by a Hudson River Cruise. If you do not receive this information, through the Council Newsletter, please contact me at

beesrcchair@yahoo.com or at 631-473-7943.

ANNUITY RESOURCES - RETIREMENT CALCULATORS AND PLANNERS

With almost a third of the ESBOCES staff nearing retirement age, it is a life changing decision that many of us face. You should always start with your particular retirement system. Links for those systems can be found on Page 12 and 15.

Below are some "What If?" tools to see what the future may hold for you.

[Living to 100](#) – Use this interesting calculator to see if you will live to be 100! It's a fun and good way to help determine how long you may live based on different factors.

[Turning 62](#) – This page features all kinds of helpful information as well as links to calculators to help you get ready for when you turn the retirement age of 62.

[How Long Will my Money Last?](#) – This form can help you figure out how much of your 401(k) money will last and for how long after you retire.

[My Plan](#) – This fun, interactive, and simple calculator lets you enter in your personal information to come up with a good retirement strategy for you.

[Am I Saving Enough for Retirement?](#) – The folks at MSN Money have a helpful calculator that allows you to determine if you are saving up enough cash for retirement and if not, where you need to be in order to stay at a comfortable level.

[For Military Members](#) – These online calculators can help those who serve or have served in the military determine their retirement pay and benefits.

[Retirement Roadmap](#) – AARP offers a fun interactive guide to help you learn more about retirement planning.

[Healthy Retirement Readiness Tool](#) – Your overall health is just as important as your financial health, so use this tool to make sure you are healthy in other ways as well.

BEEES

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SAS.....Lisa Reilly
Special Education.....Jim Beck
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