

THE Yonkers Teacher

January 2026

Vol. L No. 5

Official Publication of the Yonkers Federation of Teachers

January: A Time to Reset, Reflect, and Rise

35 East Grassy Sprain Rd.
Yonkers, NY 10710
(914) 793-0200
Fax (914)793-7365

EDITOR:

Christine Morrone

PRODUCTION/ DISTRIBUTION EDITORS:

Jayne Downes
Alyssa Murray
Christine Heidelberg

PRODUCTION/ DISTRIBUTION TEAM:

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Samantha Rosado-Ciriello



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A Union of Professionals



Dear YFT Members,

Welcome back from the holiday break. I hope you had an opportunity to spend time with family and friends, rest, laugh, and truly recharge—because January is our time to reset, reflect, and rise.

Our Moment to Rise

We refuse to accept “this is just how it is.” January is our moment to rise, organize, and fight for the schools our students and staff deserve. At the same time, it is also a moment to pause and reflect. The first half of this school year tested our patience, flexibility, and creativity in ways we never imagined—from shifting instruction, to internet outages, to the ever-growing needs of our students. Yet still, we rose. We found new ways to connect, support, and lead. This is what solidarity in action looks like.

Looking Back: Victories Amid Challenges

The winter months can feel long and heavy, especially in our classrooms where the demands never slow down. However, they also reveal something extraordinary—the resilience and heart of our members. When we look back, we don’t just see obstacles. We see victories:

- Teachers innovating daily to reach every student.
- Teaching assistants holding schools together behind the scenes.
- Counselors, psychologists, social workers, and support staff meeting growing emotional and academic needs.

Building reps, committees, and members speaking up, organizing, and standing firm. These moments remind us that advocacy is not optional—it is essential.

Moving Forward: With Clarity and Courage

As we move into the second half of the year, let’s do so with both clarity and courage:

- Clarity to see what must change.
- Courage to make it happen.

Our voices matter. Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions. Every meeting attended. Every survey completed. Every conversation that challenges the status quo strengthens our collective power. Progress does not happen by chance—it happens because we demand it.

Self-Care Is Essential

While we fight for change, we must also care for ourselves and one another.

- Burnout is real. Fatigue is real.
- Rest is not weakness—it is necessary for survival and sustainability.
- Lean on your colleagues. Reach out when you need support.
- Celebrate the small wins.

Remember: Collectively, we are the union. Our mission is to protect, uplift, and stand united—every step of the way.

(Continued on page 2)

As we enter 2026, we continue to face real challenges—technology failures, complex scheduling, and interrupted mandated services—but we also face powerful opportunities to shape the future of education in our district. Together, we will continue to advocate for fairness, equity, dignity, and excellence for both staff and students by amplifying voices and expanding choices.

We don't just teach through January—we lead through it!

In solidarity,

Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, President, Yonkers Federation of Teachers

“You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once, but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have.”

— [Michelle Obama](#)

***Important Reminder:** If you are interested in speaking or attending, the next Yonkers Public Schools Board of Education meeting is

January 21 | 5:30 PM | Saunders High School

You must sign up in advance online.



Retiree Member Corner by Florence McCue (fmccue@yft860.org)

SAVE THE DATE for the YFT Retiree Dinner on June 16, 2026 at Dunwoodie.

Plan to celebrate with those retiring from your school!

Medicare Eligible Retirees (65 years of age or over):

Medicare Part A No fee Hospital coverage

Medicare Part B Basic monthly Premium \$202.90 plus maybe an

Income Related Surcharge Amount which depends on your income from 2 years ago.

Medicare Part C WE DO NOT sign up for this It is “Medicare ADVANTAGE”. We DO NOT want this. It will remove the medical insurance you now have.

Medicare Part D We do NOT sign up for Part D but our Empire Plan DOES provide this for us.

NOTE: Medicare Part B Basic monthly payment amounts are reimbursed to you automatically at the end of each calendar quarter.

ALSO NOTE: If you pay monthly surcharge amounts for Part B and for Part D, the amounts you have already paid will be requested by the district around January/early February and you will fill out the reimbursement form they have mailed to you and attach proof that you have made the additional payments. These 2025 payments will be reimbursed in one lump sum around June 1, 2026.

Part D reimbursements as well as cost-free Empire Plan secondary coverage are provided to all eligible YFT retirees pursuant to YFT-YPS arbitration awards.

Social Security Administration: 1-800-772-1213

Center for Medicare Services 1-800-633-4227

Florida Residents and Snow Birds

NYSUT (including UFT from NYC) and other NY union members in AFL-CIO are active politically, socially and in community service. A NYSUT retiree is [president of the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans, and I facilitate a political action group of all the unions in Florida.

If you are interested in attending meetings (zoom or in person) or participating in some way or for more information you may contact Miriam Hanan, retiree consultant miriam.hanan@nyasut.org or Felicia Bruce NYSUT statewide retiree Council and FLARA Pres spmomtch1@aol.com or you can contact me at fmccue@yft860.org. I will be attending the May 2026 statewide meeting in Orlando.

SAVE the DATE March 8th TIER 6 Rally in Albany. Retirees are joining our in service members and all of our Labor siblings. Busses are available. You received the sign-up email from YFT.

RETIRING THIS YEAR?

If you are DEFINITELY retiring at the end of this year, you will be invited to the regional WELCOME TO RETIREMENT workshop some time in April and to the YFT specific informational meeting some time in May.

BLUEPRINT FOR A SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT Guide can be found at NYSUT.org

If you are thinking about retiring in the next few years these meetings/workshops are NOT for you. They do not help you decide WHEN to retire. You will receive that information from the Retirement System events and online and by phone and you can schedule a private call or visit.

NYS Teachers Retirement System Nysr.org 1-800-348-7298

If any TRS group workshops are being held in our area, we will let you know.



YONKERS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
Committed to Excellence in Education

Samantha Rosado-Ciriello
President

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Yonkers, New York 10710
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Fax: 914-793-7365

Election Schedule Update!

1. The NYSUT RA 2026 Election Results are reported in the insert in this newsletter.
2. The AFT RA 2026 Election will now be held at some time in late winter/early spring. The reason this needed to be changed was due to the fact that the YFT has not received the full details for this convention yet. We will post the election schedule for this in the February Newsletter.
3. **Election of Welfare Fund Trustee:**

The term of Welfare Fund Trustee to which Nancy Ciraldo was elected expires in January. An election to fill that position for a new three-year term is now in order. Nancy has indicated her desire to continue in this capacity for the new term and therefore will have her name placed into nomination. The Welfare Fund Trustee will be a three-year term from 2026 to 2029.

The trustees of the YFT Welfare Fund are legally responsible for the supervision of the funds of the Fund. They evaluate, select, and supervise the various provisions or benefits which the Fund supplies to the professional staff. This requires many meetings with attorneys, accountants, fund consultants, and insurance company representatives. Although the trustees do not physically handle claims and related paperwork, they are personally and legally responsible for the funds they administer. The trustees are regulated by federal and state law and severe penalties are prescribed for deviation from these regulations. The trustees received no compensation for their services.

If any YFT member wishes to become a candidate for this position, this desire should be made known, in writing, to the YFT at its office, 35 E Grassy Sprain Road, Yonkers, NY 10710, no later than 4:15 p.m., Wednesday, January 7, 2026. If a contest develops, the election shall be held Wednesday, January 28, 2026. For further information, call the YFT office at 914-793-0200

Fraternally,
The Election Committee



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Samantha Rosado-Ciriello
President

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December 11, 2025

To All YFT Members,

Since there was no contest for the delegates to the NYSUT Representative Assembly Convention, the following will accompany Samantha Rosado-Ciriello to the convention, which will be held in Albany, NY May 1-2, 2026.

Michael Garbowski	Michael Ciriello	Lia Council	Erin Gorman
Jamie Downs	Jayne Downes	Brian Foster	Phil Vassari
Jennifer Lorio	Shanauzelda Montgomery	Lynn O'Donnell	Noelia Soto
Mitchell Polay	Christine Morrone	Christine Heidelberger	Megan Westcott
Shai Stephenson	Kenneth Texler	Elizabeth DeLuca	

The alternates, who were unopposed, agreed to have their names drawn at random and will serve in the following order, if necessary:

Bryan Boyd	Andrianna Theodoropoulos	Karina Polanco-Black
Kelly Finlaw	Amy Paci	
Gina Mazahreh	Wael Awwad	

Fraternally,
The Election Committee



A Message from Your Treasurer, Ken Texler

It's that time again! Time to start getting all your papers in order for tax season. As you're preparing, remember that your YFT union dues are a 100% deductible expense on your income tax form. Here is a breakdown of dues amounts for 2025:

Teachers

\$1,063.41

TAs \$35,000 and above

\$941.79

TAs \$34,999 and under

\$842.57



Teachers retired at the end of 2023-2024

\$748.16

Retired Teachers

\$88.00

Per Diem Substitute Teachers and Hourly Workers

\$1.94 for each day worked January – August

\$1.99 for each day worked September– December

January 2026

5th 3:45pm	COR Committee Meeting	YFT
7th 3:45pm	Executive Board	YFT
8th 3:45pm	Ed Issues	YFT
12th 3:45pm	YFT T A Meeting	YFT
13th 3:45pm	Women's Committee	YFT
15th 3:45pm	Building Assembly	Roosevelt HS
21st 3:45pm	Executive Board	YFT
21st 5:00pm	Board of Ed Meeting	Saunders
22nd 3:45pm	Human & Civil Rights	YFT



The YFT Executive Board would like to wish all our hardworking members a happy, healthy and prosperous new year ahead!