



Rush-Henrietta  
Employees' Association  
Teachers' Chapter  
Volume 14 Issue 1  
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# RH TEACHER

## PRESIDENTS CORNER

"Welcome back!" to all those veteran members of RHEA and "Hello!" to those who are new to the RHEA family. I hope things are going well for you as you worked through the first day "Hello's" with your students, Open Houses, and our preparations for the end of the first quarter. I would like to use this opportunity to share information about APPR.

When I spoke to you on Opening Day 2012 the Association and the District did not yet have State Education Department approval of our locally negotiated APPR agreement. From this you can see that the State now has intruded into the local negotiations process, trying to exert oversight within the process of reaching local agreements. The Association's Negotiations Team and the District met the following day for many hours with direct contact with SED to work out the final details to get an approved plan. We did this because the Association, with support from NYSUT, directed the District to a \$2million grant over 3 years to support APPR and as a result of our approved APPR agreement the District was awarded this grant. In addition, it allowed R-H to meet the governor's January 2013 deadline to have an approved APPR agreement and R-H will not see a freeze on state aid for the next school year.

RHEA has spent the month of September educating our members, with the support of the District and the Teacher Center, on the APPR agreement at general meetings at Sperry, Roth, and Burger schools. For those unable to attend I will break down the agreement in general terms (also please view the resources distributed at those meetings at this link: <http://rhea.ny.aft.org/appr-resources/informational-powerpoint-presentations>) APPR is a **Teacher Evaluation System** and the intent is to evaluate teacher performance and to enhance teacher growth in and reflection about the profession. It has nothing to do with student performance and student growth. I can see you shaking your head and I understand your frustration but you need to understand the "wise politicians in Washington, DC and Albany" imposed this process on the Association and the District for political points and it had nothing to do with students.

Given the fact this APPR process was imposed by state mandate, the Association and the District both agreed to come up with a system that was as simple as possible, met the guidelines, and would not be used to punish teachers. Both sides agreed that since the process is so new and there were many unknowns that it would be prudent to negotiate a one-year agreement, which includes "a hold harmless" clause for all teachers in the 2012-13 school year. This means that no APPR evaluations for the 2012-13 school year will go into any personnel files and only the teacher will receive a copy at the end of the process.

RHEA will continue to offer support and guidance on the APPR process as it unfolds. I am currently meeting bi-weekly with a group we call the APPR Support Team. The group includes Dina Wilson Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Joanne Mattiucci, Director of Professional Development, and John Prouty, Teacher Center Director. The purpose of this team is to problem solve unforeseen APPR related questions and concerns, and also to maintain consistent and timely communications within all levels of our Rush-Henrietta school community. So if at any time you need assistance please contact myself, John Prouty, your Building Rep., or the APPR Teacher Leader in your building.

Last, please visit our website <http://rhea.ny.aft.org/appr-resources> for information on APPR. Thank you and best wishes for a great school year, Brad.

**Professionally and in unity,  
Brad Crooks  
President, RHEA Teachers' Chapter**

## **Be A Straw Cutter...** **By John Prouty, Teacher Center Director**

We are in the midst of challenging times in public education, and it seems everyone I know in the profession, teachers and administrators alike, are working as hard as they ever have.

So permit me this small forum to offer perspective and encouragement.

As many of you know, we have entered the year of required implementation for New York State's three "Race to the Top" initiatives – Common Core Standards, Data Driven Instruction, and the new APPR process. Here at R-H, the planning for these changes has been going on behind the scenes for at least the past 18 months. Primary support for each of these was assigned as follows:

- Common Core through the work of Directors and Departments,
- Data Driven Instruction (a.k.a. – School Based Inquiry or SBI) via course and grade level teams at the Building level, and
- APPR as a result of the work of RHEA and the Teacher Center.

The union and teacher center, along with the Offices of the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Professional Development, began planning for the implementation of the new APPR process about a year ago. Early on, the decision was made to prepare colleagues to deliver "Just in Time" support.

During the past year, the teacher center trained two sets of Teacher Leaders (see page 3 for names) in anticipation of APPR:

### **1) Peer Assisting Leaders**

Thirty-one teachers were trained last spring in anticipation of APPR roll – out. They are prepared to give support in the setting of your own classroom. Their training focused on two elements:

- Evidence based observing,
- Growth focused feedback.

These teachers are now available to help you. We foresee two ways you may want to work with these colleagues:

- Preparing for an observation, with a particular Danielson Rubric Component in mind,
- Growing towards "distinguished" practice.

The type of support available includes:

- Visiting your classroom to record evidence in a Danielson Rubric Component area of your choice.
- Offering feedback after a visit (theirs or that of an administrator), which includes the two of you consulting the Danielson Rubric & book to "rate" the evidence.

When working with a Peer Assisting Leader, you should expect a brief conversation before their classroom visit occurs, where you will pick the component area (s) you want looked at. As well, you will discuss the type of feedback you want. Finally, you should expect to debrief together afterwards.

### **2) APPR Leaders:**

Ten teachers (one per building) were trained this summer along with the Administrators in the APPR Process, including the use of the Danielson Rubric.

These colleagues are trained to give you support in:

- Strategizing how to develop evidence in Danielson rubric component areas
- Answering questions about
  - Correlating evidence to the Danielson Rubric
  - Structured Review artifacts
  - Evidence tagging (pre-observation form and post – reflection form)
  - Preparing your structured review for presentation

These colleagues are available to talk with you one on one, but will also offer after school sessions periodically, where you will receive help with the "next step" in the APPR process.

The Offices of the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Professional Development have also provided key support for the new APPR process. As well as supporting the administrators with APPR training and implementation, these offices also have put in place:

- 1) Your *Enhancing Professional Practice* Book,
- 2) Copies in your school library of *Implementing the Framework for Teaching*, which is chock full of examples and ideas for each and every component of the Danielson rubric,
- 3) Teachscape support and training (delivered by your Library Media Specialists),
- 4) Your Administrator's communiqués delivered on opening day and at staff meetings, intent on "consistency" in communication and APPR rollout across all 10 district buildings.

So a parting thought... in the midst of all these changes, if you are struggling, please reach out for help. And by all means, if you see a colleague languishing, be a "straw cutter," as suggested by Jarod Kintz in his recent book, *This Book Has No Title!*

"I cut an inch off of every straw I see, just to make the world suck a little less."

**APPR Teacher Leaders:**

- Winslow – Adam Huck, Libby Steblenko
- Crane – MaryJo Costello
- Fyle – Marla Sugar
- Sherman – Kristen Mancari
- Leary – Joanne White (Brad Crooks also available)
- Roth – Stacy House
- Burger – Donna Plain, Christine Bialaszewski
- NGA/Sperry – Krista Adamo, John Prouty
- Vollmer – Donna Plain (Maureen Tubridy)

**PEER ASSISTING TEACHER LEADERS:**

<b><u>Burger</u></b>	David Baumgartner	Kristen Guthrie	Marti Henderson	Amy Warner			
<b><u>Crane</u></b>	Sheila Buck	Emily Nudds					
<b><u>Fyle</u></b>	Starla Gerlach	Beth Madden					
<b><u>Leary</u></b>	Bridget Ashton	Diane Downer	Jim Walther	Stacy Leyland			
<b><u>Roth</u></b>	Pam Claeys	Kaci Cresswell	Rene Sanchez-Kazacos	Colleen McCarthy-White			
<b><u>Sherman</u></b>	Karen LeFevre	Amy Wilson					
<b><u>Sperry</u></b>	Chuck Abell	Ross Amstey	Joe Bellanca	Mike Fantauzzo	Sue Sanbury	Becky Zwas	Marissa Privitere
<b><u>Vollmer</u></b>	Maureen Tubridy						
<b><u>NGA</u></b>	Jenny Gaul	Kim Glanton	Chris Keil				
<b><u>Winslow</u></b>	Jen Dreywood	Marleah Duncan					

**UNION AND DISTRICT SUPPORTS FOR APPR**

**Peer Leaders:**

- Assistance and feedback from a peer
- Trained in Evidence-Based observing
- Can help you correlate classroom practices to the Danielson Rubric
- Assist with reflective growth and/or problem solving

**Administration:**

- Announced/ Unannounced observations
- Script evidence and send to teachers
- Be aware of and suggest appropriate resources/PD as needed
- Coordinate APPR and Rubric related PD with Teacher Center



**RHEA Union Reps**

- Q & A about:
  - ❖ APPR Process
  - ❖ APPR Timeline
  - ❖ Contractual obligation and forms
- Front line for concerns

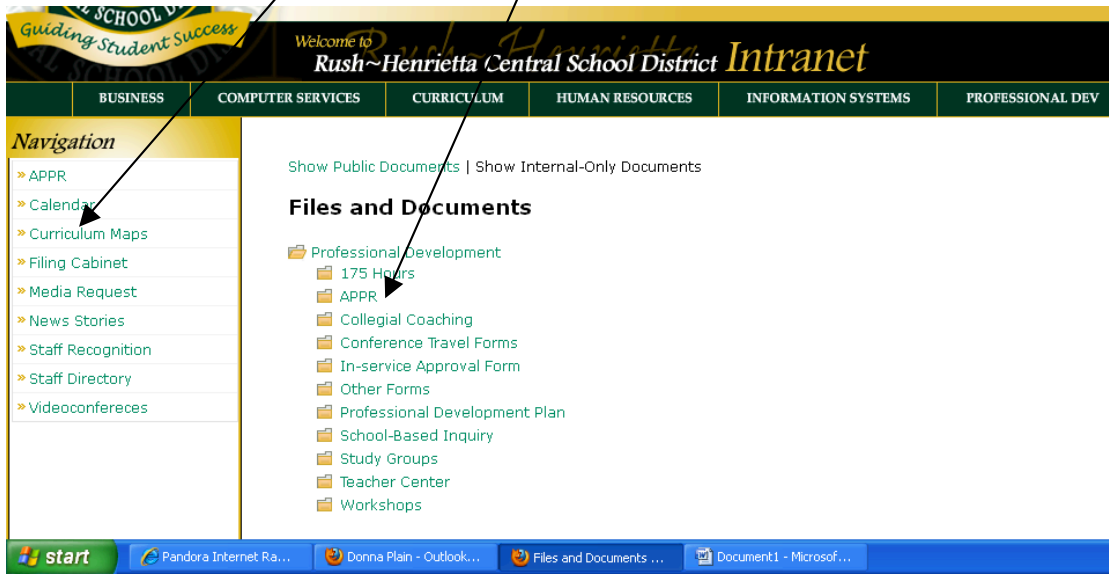
**APPR Leaders:**

- Can help you strategize how to develop evidence in Danielson rubric component areas
- Q & A about:
  - ❖ Danielson Rubric
  - ❖ Structured Review artifacts
  - ❖ Evidence tagging

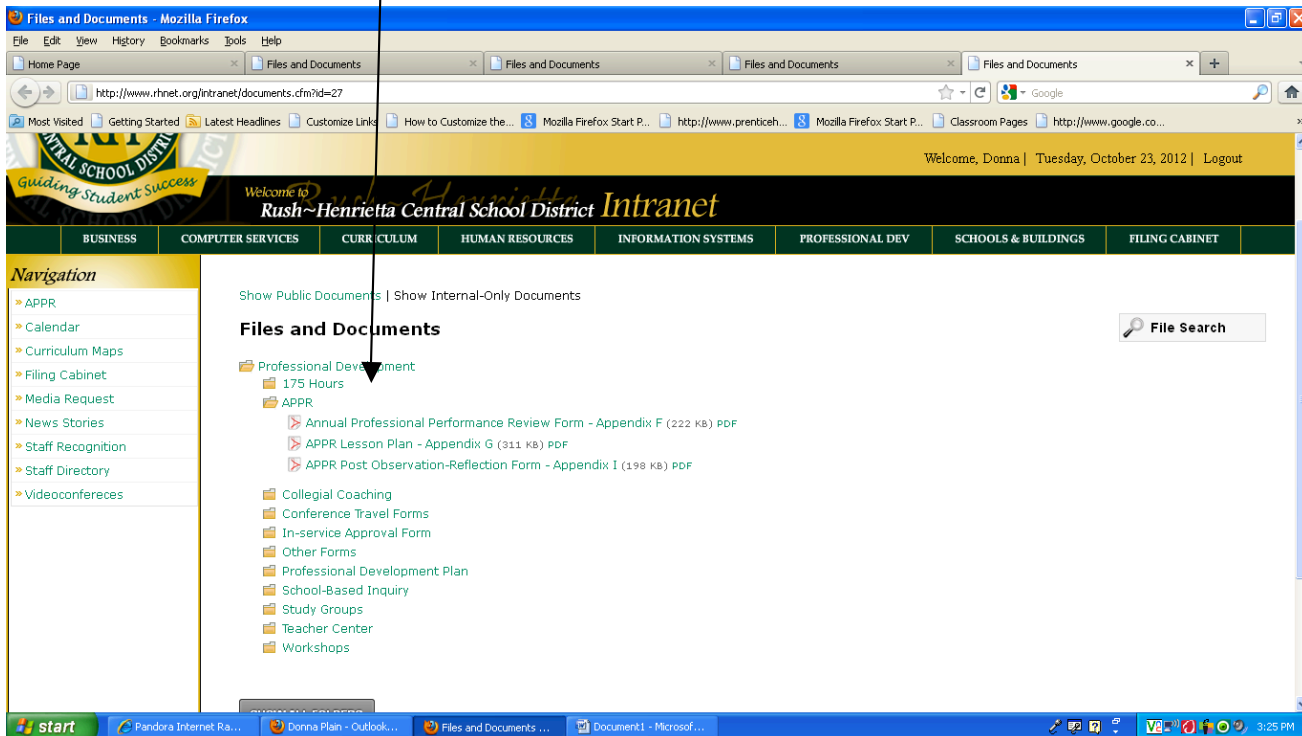
**FYI: APPR FORMS**

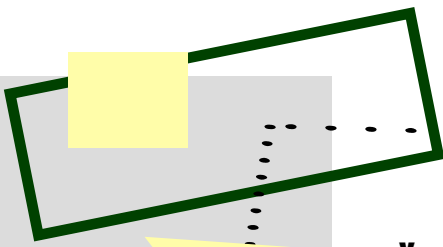
**APPR forms: download from RH staff intranet**

- 1. Under Navigation click APPR and the Files and Documents Opens,**
- 2. click folder marked APPR to open folder**



**Once the folder is open, download to save the 3 forms to a folder in your documents folder. You can type in the forms. Type up your lesson plan (pre-observation form) using the APPR Lesson Plan as well as your post-observation reflection form. While they are the same forms loaded in your teachscape folder, we're finding that it is much easier to type in these forms.**





## Your New Contract By: Jon DelVecchio

I would like to congratulate the RHEA Negotiation Committee members who successfully negotiated a winning contract through 2014. As the Grievance Committee chairperson, I can directly see the positive impact it has had on our members. While we did compromise in certain areas, overall, we have come out ahead in the end.

A few highlights of **the changes that I like:**

- **Step 2 of the grievance procedure has changed.** Previously, too few individuals were involved in Step 2 meetings. Now, more stakeholders will be present at these meetings. The result should lead to quicker and more productive resolutions.
- **Meetings!** Instead of attending weekly 90-minute meetings after school (6 hours/month), we are now required to attend bi-weekly 60-minute meetings (2 hours/month).
- **Benefits.** We received a pay raise and very affordable health insurance. Retirees can make more financial health care decisions.
- **Employment year.** We work one day less (187), which equals one more day of vacation for you.
- **Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR).** More recently, the negotiation committee bargained Article 16, Sections 1-5 with the district. It is a clear and fair appraisal system that seems to be beneficial to all.

As with any contract change, new provisions might not be fully understood, appreciated or implemented as originally intended. That's what you have your building representatives and leadership team for. Read through your new contract and ask questions. Communicate with us. Reach out to us. We're here to serve you.

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