REMEMBER TO VOTE! ELECTION DAY, NOV. 6. 2018

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And much more!
Welcome back to all of my BMUST brothers and sisters and a special welcome to our new staff members. I hope the new school year is progressing well with a renewed sense of solidarity after the Janus decision. Upon discovering this summer that we had 162 unaccounted for dues deduction cards (quite a curveball to say the least), we quickly got to work to have all of these teachers sign new cards to ensure their continued membership in BMUST. With an enormous assist from our administrative assistant Meg Hirsch, our task was completed by mid-September. Thank you to Meg and The Board of Trustees for working so diligently to help maintain BMUST membership at 100%. I appreciate your efforts which are truly required year-round for our members. We must always remain cognizant of our responsibility to them and strive to represent them well so the thought of dropping their BMUST membership is never even contemplated. 100% participation every year must be the goal and expectation.

In light of the Janus decision and the anticipated attacks on unions, I encouraged everyone during my opening day speech to strive to do something to feel a stronger connection with BMUST. This is your union and our strength is in the participation of our members. Attend a rally, come to a BMUST party, join a committee, wear your BMUST shirt…anything to show your solidarity with your union. We need you!

One BMUST sponsored activity I would encourage everyone to attend (especially our new members) is the Retirement/Financial Planning Seminar hosted by our retirement consultant, Hank Sessa, on Thursday, December 6. The information Hank provides, gleaned from his years working with NYSUT and the retirement system, is invaluable. No matter what stage you are in your career, understanding your pension, social security, 403b, 457, Vanguard and Roth plans can assist our members in making informed decisions with their financial advisors about how to prepare for a comfortable and secure retirement. We’re hoping the seminar will educate our members to ask the questions which will be helpful in making more informed choices about their retirement savings.

BMUST will always remain vigilant to protect our members post Janus decision. While I certainly don’t anticipate anyone choosing to refuse to become a BMUST member, it is nevertheless incumbent upon us to prepare for scenarios where we have “free-riders” working alongside us in Bellmore-Merrick. We are presently examining our Constitution and By-laws to determine if language changes are warranted to clarify the rights of members and non-members. We will need to be aware of the Janus decision during contract negotiations, again to determine if changes are needed to protect our members. While there is still much non-members are entitled to in our contact, there is also a great deal that they are not. This needs to be crystal clear. BMUST members will be apprised of any modifications to our Constitution and By-laws, NYSUT will be consulted, and a vote among staff will be required to implement any changes.

We are very fortunate to be working here in Bellmore-Merrick. Our union is strong, our relationship with administration is very positive, and we have an incredibly supportive community. No Supreme Court decision now or in the future will take away what we have nurtured here in Bellmore-Merrick. Some days may be more challenging than others and our journey might take a slight detour occasionally. Will everything that we encounter during our careers make us happy? Very unlikely. What we must always return to is our faith and trust in each other and the union that stands behind us.

BMUST will always be there for you. Please don’t ever forget that.

In solidarity,

Mark
Mepham H.S. has been hosting a veterans’ flag field of honor the past three years. Social Studies teachers & BMUST Community Service Award winners, Kerry Dennis and Chris Patten, have organized this important community event. Sarah Bender and Stu Stein of the Social Studies Department and Marc Achtziger of the English Department also were a guiding force in the planning of this event, our 4th annual Flag Field of Honor.

The students who participated were selected from the Participation in Government course and the Senior Experience program.

Flags were purchased in honor of U.S. Veterans, our current service men and women, 9/11 victims and first responders or simply to support the cause. All proceeds from the sale of flags will go to Building Homes for Heroes.

The Seniors are also working to support the building of a home for a deserving veteran selected. The flags will be on display on the front lawn of Mepham from October 28th - December 9th.

We have had overwhelming support from the Mepham faculty and the Bellmore-Merrick Central Administration along with the school community.

Thank you Kerry, Chris, and everyone who has supported this very worthwhile cause and community service initiative!
CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. Dennis Urban (JFK-Social Studies), New York State History Teacher of the Year! The award was presented by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and honors Dr. Urban’s dedication and commitment to academic excellence. Dennis teaches AP U.S. History, United States History and Government (Inclusive/Collaborative), Historical Research, Participation in Government, and Sociology. Congratulations, Dennis!

The Science Department took the top prize of first place at this year’s Costume Day. Science teachers dressed as Pac Man characters, simulating the best features of the nostalgic arcade game in the school’s courtyard. The stunt was captured on video and can be viewed here. Congratulations, Science teachers, for a job well done!
Merrick Avenue M.S. kicked off the year with another visit from the Ram!

We have had a smooth transition from the summer into this new school year. We welcomed some brand new staff to our building; Anthony Brandofino in the Music Department, Marley Goldman and Mark Gross, both in the Guidance Department, as well as other colleagues from BMCHSD who have joined our Ramily from other buildings.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

The Robotix Club and our 8th graders will be working with Michelle Biancardo and our newly arrived VEX robots. We are looking forward to seeing what these guys (human and robot) can do!

Our staff dressed down to raise money to donate to the Making Strides Breast Cancer walk.

A ‘shout-out’ goes to Cory Greene for his quick thinking. While on cafeteria duty, Cory realized a student was choking on a potato chip. He jumped into action and successfully administered the Heimlich maneuver. We really do work with everyday heroes!

Spirit week kicked off with Pajama Day (always a school-wide favorite), followed by favorite sports team day, college day, 70’s day, and culminated with MAMS donned in black and gold. All of us gathered in our school colors during the Pep Rally, which was held outside on the turf for the first time!
September 2018 marks new changes for Calhoun students and staff.

This school year Calhoun opened its counseling and wellness center to the Merrick community. Our counselors are looking forward to supporting all of the students' academic and post-secondary needs; including a strong emphasis on wellness.

Sandy Sardo is leading a meditation program at Calhoun called MINDFUL MONDAYS. It benefits personal well-being and helps you to de-stress. All are welcome!

We say goodbye and good luck to Julie Rosslee and Nick Pappas. Both served on Site Based and were active members of our Union. A huge thank you to Julie Rosslee for her unbelievable service to BMUST and Calhoun. Her selfless sacrifice day in and out for her colleagues and students cannot be overstated. Julie has expressed her voice in opposition to administration at the building and district level in a tactful and graceful way. She will be missed.
“GRAND AVENUE’S LIBRARY’S EXCITING NEW FACE”

BY STACI PEKUSIC (GRAND AVE M.S) LOCAL DO’S WRITER

After the retirement last June of our librarian, Rosanne Walker, Grand Avenue Middle School teachers were introduced to our new librarian, Kathryn Beleckas, who quickly made a great first impression.

Kate introduced herself this September by requesting that faculty members pose with their favorite books for “shelfies,” which are posted in the hallway outside of the library. This was a great way for the staff not only to get to know their new librarian, but also to have some fun while showing their appreciation of reading. Next, Kate celebrated Banned Books Week with a display in the library and an opportunity for students and staff to pose for “mug shots” with books that have been banned in the past for various reasons.

Finally, Kate rounded out the first month with library orientations for seventh- and eighth-graders that centered on a “breakout” activity and simultaneously introduced students to library concepts.

So far, Kate says she most appreciates the collaboration of faculty and students who have gotten involved in library activities. She has enlisted the participation of over fifty “library helpers” who shelve books and aid the English department with book labels. They are also at work on creating a giant Jenga game (using soda can sleeves and brown paper) for a fun lunchtime activity.

Other activities in the library include word games, such as Bananagrams and Boggle, and a Maker Space that offers holiday-themed crafts.

What’s next? Kathryn hopes to “genrify” the library: reorganizing books according to genre in order to make it easier for users to find what they need. Also, as a long-term goal, she hopes to restock the shelves with new books, as requested by staff, updating the older collection of non-fiction with more useful, timely picks.

Grand Avenue wishes a hearty “Welcome” to our lively, creative, new colleague!
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The Power of the Union

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