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# ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

NEW YORK

*Affiliate of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators  
Local 1 - AFSA, AFL-CIO*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Gail Irizarry

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This school year the Executive Board of the Association of Assistant Principals took its grassroots movement on the road. Our goal was to personally meet as many members as we could from each borough and to enlist new members. Our journey began in November 2023 with our Brooklyn members, and we concluded the tour in Manhattan in February of 2024. This campaign was an exhilarating experience. At these meetings we broke bread with other brothers and sisters, participated in professional development, earned CTLE credits, engaged with CSA executive boards members regarding contractual matters and most importantly, we heard from our members about their unique needs. Some members attended more than one meeting in different boroughs.

As we reflected upon our findings, we concluded that there are many concerns that need to be addressed and achievements that need to be acknowledged. This is not a new observation. In 1961, the founding fathers of AAP gathered and united to form an association that would give a voice to assistant principals in New York City. In 1962 we were one out of 11 associations that joined to form the Council of Supervisory Associations, which, in 1971 became the Council of Supervisors and Administrators.

Today, there are 660 members in the Association Assistant Principals out of 1850 active assistant principals in NYC public schools. Our next goal is to increase membership so that we continue to have a united voice and platform to strengthen our association. With this said, I challenge you to help expand our association by becoming a delegate of AAP. If you are interested in representing the assistant principals in your district by becoming an Assistant Principal Delegate, please email AAPinNYC@gmail.com with your name, district and school along with a brief message on how you can contribute to the growth of our association. I urge each and every one of you to participate as an active member of AAP. All select delegates will be inducted in a special celebration in May 2024 (TBA).

Lastly, I wish everyone a Happy National Assistant Principals Week (April 1-5). As the backbone of the schools, the assistant principals tirelessly support the principal, teachers, students, and families. We recognize our pivotal role in our schools and celebrate your passion and dedication during this week and every day.

In Unity,  
*Gail*

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Grace How

## Member Voices

### Life in Excess by AAP\* Grace How

*\*Assigned Assistant Principal*

Let's start at the beginning. My role as excessed Assistant Principal was not by my choice. How I became excessed is not the point of this story. I was forced to leave a position and a school that I had built connections to students, families and staff over 3 years which was particularly traumatic as these were students with IEPs and I had collaborated with a fine team of educators to support this community.

I had to quickly process my emotions and focus on my new role as an excessed administrator as no "guidance" exists except you are told to await a directive from the district superintendent office (never happened) and you will get a letter from HR - which came on the Sunday before the last Monday in August that the AP's start the new school year.

CSA has since improved the situation so that all excessed Administrators must be notified of their next school year's placement by mid-June before the school year ends. CSA also ensured that each excessed administrator's assignment would be for the full school year and that they could not be "moved" without their notification and consent.

Once you are excessed your title becomes "Administrator in Excess" and HR places you in your last appointed position. This is different for each administrator in excess. Sadly, for those untenured administrators who were not appointed to a prior administrative position you do revert back to your last teacher position. So all unappointed AP's- make sure your C-30's are done so you are not "interim acting" any longer than necessary.

So, I have been "assigned" to various elementary schools in District 2 in the last 6 years by the District Superintendent. Up until very recently, no district superintendent or for that matter anyone in the district office took any interest in me or my placement within the district. I would hope District Superintendents try to get to know any excessed administrators in their district and seriously consider how the placement of the excessed AP can yield benefits for both the school and the administrator.

Honestly, most principals didn't know what to make of me especially, as I had no experience with the elementary school environment and population. And most principals were also leery and cautious with me because I was not a known entity. I felt like an alien that was dropped into a new world at my first few elementary schools. I looked at this as an opportunity for learning and faced it with focused energy, diligence and by being open and honest about what I could do for each school.

Before each new assignment I did my research prior to meeting the principals, looked at school testing data, reviewed DOE school survey results and their school websites. I also updated my resume so that it showed off my administrative skills in the best possible light. I knew I had strengths that would benefit any K-12 school.

I was also totally transparent with each principal that I knew I had to surmount a learning curve about elementary school student development and curricular matters in a short amount of time. However, I also made it clear with all the principals that I would make sure that during my yearlong assignment that I would support the principal and school's mission and work diligently with them to provide a safe and warm learning community.

At every school, I got to know the students, families, staff, custodians, School Food staff, after school program staff and the SSA's. I soon realized that most elementary schools had more in common than not. Teachers, students and caregivers always needed space and wanted to be heard. The operations for keeping a school running were consistent with maintaining a safe learning environment at any school and meeting DOE mandates. It was always bittersweet at the end of the year saying farewell to students across the grades, knowing that I would not return to welcome them in the new school year.

The days passed quickly into months and then years. I adjusted to the annual routine of getting a new assignment but during that time I also always applied for AP vacancies and even got called to sit for C-30's that didn't go any further but was good practice. I made sure to submit my annual goals with each principal and was always given a satisfactory year end rating and every principal was very gracious and thanked me for my dedicated efforts at the end of every school year.

Then Covid happened and the DOE had to pivot as never before. I was fortunate to be assigned to a K-8 school for 2020-21 year - the return from full remote learning - where the administrative team truly collaborated to support the community with its varied schedules and "pods".

*(continued on Page 6)*



Janiece Wardlow

# Member Voices

## A Day in the Life of an Assistant Principal

### Janiece Wardlow

From the moment you step foot in the school building, you are walking onto the stage to work with your cast. All lights shine on you whether you succeed, misstep, misspoke, or nailed your lines just right. Just envision navigating countless staff absences, technical glitches, and one safety agent to help facilitate the morning rush of students entering your school building. On top of navigating the logistics of leadership, add managing and supporting parents, while focusing on why we entered this profession to begin with, focusing on student learning, well-being and safety throughout the day.

This is just act one, scene one in *A Day in the Life of an Assistant Principal*. Here are some suggestions to smooth out the bumps.

#### Managing Parents

Parent concerns and complaints are daily facets of working in New York City Public Schools. Some require check-ins on their child's progress, or just having someone listen to their concerns.

Families are still learning how to understand curricula standards and ways to best support their child(ren). The number of initial referrals for special education services has more than doubled in the past three years. Families are still struggling with technology and logging onto different platforms their children use in and out of school.

The solution: Host a Parent Tech Night where teachers can walk parents through how to use learning platforms and programs that schools have subscriptions to. Partner with a local Community Based Organization and the CEC in your district in supporting this once arduous experience easier for parents and students.

#### Focusing on Students

Much of our time on stage is spent in the classroom observing pedagogical practices and their impact on student outcomes. For some, this is where the work truly comes alive. To witness those "ah-ha" moments, listening in to sparring sessions with students, and opening students' work products to note their progression. That's Priceless!

Assistant principals must have a prepense plan for helping students move forward for teacher efficacy. One way to achieve this is to have an open door-door policy, something I have implemented in my practice with my team of teachers. Both students and teachers can visit me to address both personal and professional concerns. Students visit daily for hugs, snacks, or just to say hello.

Solutions: Providing in-house professional development opportunities for teachers presented by staff in a given expertise area, implementing intervisitations, meeting with teachers during grade-level meetings to look at data, creating surveys for teachers to share areas they would like professional development.

#### Navigating the Leadership

And the award for the best supporting actor/actress goes to YOU! I want all my colleagues to know, you are working hard for your families, for your students, and for your own professional growth. With looming deadlines and compliance, we are in the business of building well-rounded individuals that have tools in their kit to face the day-to-day challenges. Much of the work focuses around building trusting relationships. People believe who you are by the actions you take.

If you create a schedule of what you will accomplish day-to-day, you will find yourself engrossed in the work, and with little time to listen to the noise that doesn't focus on the work at hand, losing focus of why we walked onto the stage: to provide students with a well-rounded education. Find ways to pour into yourself. And as hard as it is for me, take your lunch break. Try whenever time permits to leave the building by going for a walk. The name of the game is get up and move as we seldom get time to relax and breathe.

The Remedy: Five in Five- Do five things unrelated to the job in 5 minutes. Create the list, place it near your desktop, and like Nike says, "Just Do It!"

@Wardlow, Janiece, March 2024

*Janiece Wardlow is an Assistant Principal at the Arthur Tappan School in District 5. Ms. Wardlow has been working for New York City Public Schools for over 25 years. She is a mother of 3 boys, an avid reader, event planner, designer, and crafter.*

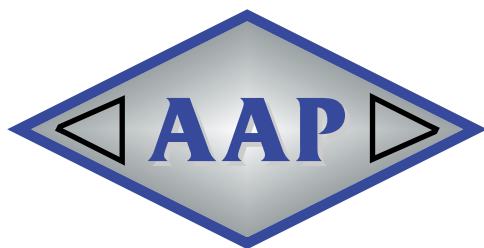
## Brooklyn Mini at Bruno Ristorante, October 17, 2023



**AAP members networking, learning and breaking bread in all five boroughs.**

### **Partnership with ELI – Workshops:**

- Building Capacity
- Preventing Burn Out- Self Care
- Trust Matters
- Documenting for the Personnel File
- Leading with Emotional Intelligence and Hope



## Bronx Mini Conference at The Pine Restaurant January 11, 2024



**Staten Island Mini Conference at The Blue Restaurant, February 15, 2024**



**Queens Mini Conference at Trattoria L'incontrp January 18, 2024**



**Manhattan Mini Conference at Pete's Tavern February 29, 2024**



**Grace How** (continued from Page 2)

I have to say, I am probably unique in that I am very flexible and find it easy to adapt to changes. I enjoy new experiences and meeting new people- students and staff. It can sometimes be difficult because you are always proving your abilities to a new principal and team. I just focus on the students; I listen and watch for what is working and what might be tweaked as needed. Every school has its own unique needs and I know I can provide a fresh perspective on how to support the school.

It's always better to establish stability and build your community at one school. But I was never given the choice. I consider myself very fortunate that I currently have a very congenial and honest relationship with my current District leaders, and they know that I will always bring my "A Game" no matter what school I am at.

In conclusion, being excessed is never a desired outcome. However, the status of being excessed does force you to deeply reflect on how you want to continue in your role as an administrator within this new status. I chose to meet the challenge head on with humility, a sense of adventure and curiosity that I would always find a path to be successful at any school I was placed in.

## Gypsy – AAP Connection Brings Unexpected Joy

Julianna Tramontana



Being a part of AAP not only connects you to a wide support system, but it is also a way to find new family members. When my fellow administrators get together for a professional conclave, it does not take long before we begin engaging in our favorite pastime, sharing pictures and stories of our pets.

And so, at the December 2022 AAP conference, one of my fellow AAP members shared a picture of a dog looking for a home. Despite having three rescue dogs already, there was something about this pup's eyes that captivated me. I convinced my husband that we needed to go to Brooklyn and meet this pup.

It is now a year later and it's hard to remember a time when Gypsy was not part of our family. The story of Gypsy continues. She is now in training to become a comfort dog at my school-I.S. 24.



## ELECTION OF AAP OFFICERS FOR 2 YEAR TERMS 2024-26

The AAP will be holding elections for its officers in May. The Election Committee, Lucie Elio, and John Oricchio will create a slate after receiving nominations for officers. Nominations of candidates for any elected office may be made by written petition by any member. Such written petition for each office must bear the signature of at least 50 members in good standing. A member in good standing may sign only one nominating petition for each office. Persons interested in obtaining nominating petitions may contact Lucie Elio, Chair of Elections Committee at [Lucie@csa-nyc.org](mailto:Lucie@csa-nyc.org). (Election notifications were sent to members early March.)

Nominating petitions must be returned post-marked no later than March 30, 2024 to Lucie Elio, CSA – AAP, 40 Rector Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10006

Elections will be held at the May meeting. The officers of the Association shall be inducted at the last meeting of the school year at the Awards and Scholarships Dinner in June and the officers will take office immediately for a term of two years.

The current slate is as follows:

1. **PRESIDENT:** Gail Irizarry
2. **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:** Joseph Napolitano
3. **VICE PRESIDENTS:** Joseph Simione, Catherine Jarrat Koatz, Tabatha Romano, Julianna Tramontana
4. **CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:** Susan Aker
5. **RECORDING SECRETARY:** Cinnamon Harris
6. **TREASURER:** Sol Flores

### Martin Safran Citizenship Award Stewart Weiner Scholarship Award

Recipients of these awards will be notified in May.

The annual Award and Scholarship Dinner will be held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at the National Arts Club located at 15 Gramercy Park South, New York NY 10003.

### AAP members support and engage in activities sponsored by other constituents of CSA.



#### **Photos Clockwise:**

- CSA Conference 10/21/2023
- HOSA Holiday Party 2023
- MSPA Conference March 2024
- SOMOS Conference Albany 03/24
- A3 Lunar Dinjner 3/6/2024

### Membership Drive Bring a Friend to an Event

Membership Information  
Contact :  
**Bob Kingsley**  
[aapexecdir@earthlink.net](mailto:aapexecdir@earthlink.net)



**ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS**

*Gail Irizarry*

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