

# NBFT SPOTLIGHT



## Special Election for Union President



**March 8, 2022**

The candidates are Stephen Gray and Sue Humanick.

Each member will be allowed to vote for 1 candidate.

The announcement of the winner will be made during the Membership meeting Tuesday, March 8th.

The protocol for the election is as follows:

- Only full members will be eligible to vote in the election.
- In order for you to vote on the Survey Monkey, you will be required to fill in using your name, school email address, your school ID number found on your badge, on your paystub (electronic or paper), and if you log into your EAP account on the district website.

**Union Directory**  
**Office Phone** 860-225-2808  
**Website:** [www.nbft.net](http://www.nbft.net)

**President**  
**Stephen Gray**  
[grays@csdnb.org](mailto:grays@csdnb.org)

**High School Vice President**  
**Sue Humanick**  
[humanick@csdnb.org](mailto:humanick@csdnb.org)

**Middle School Vice President**  
**Cliff Parker**  
[parkerc@csdnb.org](mailto:parkerc@csdnb.org)

**Elementary Vice President**  
**Dave Devost**  
[devost@csdnb.org](mailto:devost@csdnb.org)

**Elementary Vice President**  
**Laura Skinner**  
[skinnerL@csdnb.org](mailto:skinnerL@csdnb.org)

**Treasurer**  
**William Sanford**  
[sanford@csdnb.org](mailto:sanford@csdnb.org)

**Recording Secretary**  
**Basia Maselek**  
[maselek@csdnb.org](mailto:maselek@csdnb.org)

**Executive Secretary**  
**Daniel Blanchard**  
[blanchard@csdnb.org](mailto:blanchard@csdnb.org)

# Steve Gray



My name is Steve Gray and I am a 5th grade teacher at Smalley Elementary School. I have been a teacher in New Britain for twenty-five years. Prior to teaching 5th grade at Smalley, I was a Reading Teacher at Smalley and taught 3rd, 4th and 5th grades at Vance and Holmes.

I have had the privilege of being the Union Elementary Vice President for the past 14 years. Being the Vice President has afforded me the opportunity to speak on behalf of our union members and advocate for our teachers. During these times I had to listen, reflect on the various situations, plan a strategy, and execute that strategy at the building, District, and Board levels. Always, having our members' rights at the forefront.

I have been the acting President for the Union for the past two months. In that short time I have accomplished positive in-roads for all our members. Some examples are:

- Lead the call for action and change at New Britain High School. Organized the Union statement, met with the Legal & Communications Departments of AFT CT to ensure our written statement and "walk in" protest was most impactful. Between 75-100 high school members were present to "walk in" to the high school with all four major CT news outlets covering the "walk in"

# Steve Gray



- Advised middle school union leaders in reaching an agreement that impacted the work day conditions at Pulaski Middle School .....
- Met with union reps, teaching staff, school and downtown administration for a situation at Smith School about protecting plan time. Grieved the situation at Smith School...
- Managed 3 DCF accusations against our members - 2 cleared, 1 still in the process at the time of this writing
- Addressed and settled a questionable evaluation of a member.....

I am about serving the membership to the best of my ability and Unifying our members. My record of representing and advising members at all levels speaks for itself. Throughout my time with the Union I have developed and strengthened relationships at all levels.

This is what I am about: UNION UNITY= STRENGTH, CHANGE, ACTION!



I would like to introduce myself as a candidate for Union President and take this opportunity to share with you a little about myself and why I have made the decision to run for this position. My name is Susan Humanick and I teach 11th and 12th grade English at NBHS. This is my 22nd year at the high school and my 25th year in public education. I am a native New Yorker. Prior to teaching in New Britain, I taught English in Queens, NY and Bloomfield, CT. I have only taught in urban schools and over the course of my career, I have taught all grades 7-12. I worked as a Library Media Specialist for three years at NBHS until the Superintendent's redesign and subsequent end to functional media centers in our district. I have dual certification and licensure in two states. I served on the 871 Election Committee as the high school representative and later as the Elections Committee Chairperson. Like many of you, I have worked as a substitute teacher, summer school teacher, adult education teacher, tutor, and homebound teacher. I have been on countless task forces, committees, and panels over the years - both within and outside the confines of CSDNB. In my free time, I am passionate about animal advocacy, volunteerism, travel, Hawai'i, surfing, and pizza.

During my tenure at NBHS, I have witnessed four Superintendents, eight principals, dozens of administrators, and too many teachers come and go. For some, New Britain is a temporary stop; an opportunity for resumé building. I have had opportunities to go elsewhere. I work at NBHS by choice. I choose to stay because I truly love our students and I know I make a difference. I firmly believe that we have some of the best teachers anywhere. We have been faced with unprecedented challenges, forces that are actively working against us, what many would categorize as a hostile work environment, and yet...we persevere. This is a testament to the strength and dedication of 871 members.

I have currently been serving as your High School Vice President since 2015. The impetus for my VP candidacy was the pervasive harassment of me - and other women by an unscrupulous and abusive principal. I fought back using the process and procedure of our contract and federal and state labor laws. I filed a formal complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO/EEOC). My integrity forced the district to acknowledge these offenses and to open a Title IX investigation on this individual. I don't need to tell you how this played out: I am here and he is not. I knew when I decided to do the right thing and speak out, I would be putting myself at risk of possible retaliatory tactics, disciplinary action, and other unsavory possibilities. I was not intimidated. I believe if you "talk the talk, you walk the walk". Doing what is right is non-negotiable in my book.

Teachers are under siege. There is an ongoing attack on public education. Districtwide issues exacerbated by COVID-19, staff shortages, and toxic work environments have led to unfathomable levels of teacher burnout and teacher turnover. A perfect example would be the mass exodus of teachers at Pulaski and Smith schools. A strong Union leader should work with the Executive Board to provide guidance, unity, strength, and effectiveness to all of its members. A strong Union leader should be prepared at all times to listen to the membership, defend our contract, and be steadfast in their charge: represent and protect teachers' rights. There are many district wide issues to tackle. Change and effective advocacy requires courage, unity, and cohesion. Elementary, middle, and high school concerns are all equally important. Below are crucial issues I plan to address:

- Making sure administrators adhere to our contract.
- Accountability of administration: the unacceptable culture of administrative impunity, harassment, degradation, and intimidation towards teachers.
- TEACHER VOICE in decision making and solutions that involve our students and best applications of pedagogy in our classes.
- SAFE SCHOOLS: addressing student aggression, fights, weapons, drugs, guns in our buildings.
- Lack of administrative backing in matters of student discipline, rules, and regulations with violent, abusive, and threatening behavior toward teachers.
- Teacher turnover, teachers leaving mid-year, lack of administrative communication, unreasonable and unrealistic demands placed on teachers.
- Arbitrary and faulty evaluation system that places unfair demands on teachers, while not increasing measurable teacher collaboration and capacity.
- Respect for teachers and teacher time. Best use of grade level and content level team time.
- Prompt and courteous response time to your emails and calls.
- Teacher morale: See above bulleted items. Need I say more?

NBHS teachers are already familiar with how I conduct monthly LMM with the Principal, my attention to detail, my transparency, and the unwavering fulfillment of my job responsibilities as Vice President. There are former NBHS Union members serving in the middle and elementary settings that can attest to my commitment to the membership. I have the time management skills, commitment, dedication, and unrivaled tenacity that this responsibility demands. I will make it my mission to work closely and transparently with elementary and middle school VPs and support issues brought forth. I have long-standing union experience and a record that demonstrates a commitment to teacher advocacy. I lead by example and will continue to advocate for all of our members. I have facilitated many successful meetings with administrators and while I may not be liked by all administrators, I am respected by them and my teaching ability, especially with some of NBHS's most resistant learners, has never been challenged, due to my record of success. I have proven I am a quick learner and can adapt to anything. I can and will hit the ground running. I thrive under pressure and I do not shy away from public forums. I do not watch from the sidelines, I act to get things done. I have personal and professional ethics that are not malleable; I will do what's right, and treat everyone with respect.

I will know the contract and your rights and I will not dissuade you from exercising those rights! If elected, I will do everything in my power to work with all stakeholders and represent the wishes and needs of the entire membership. If you support my ideas and position on matters and you believe me to be the best candidate, I ask you to cast your vote for me on March 8th. I would like to express my gratitude for those of you who have taken the time to attend my Zoom sessions and reach out via email. I will be holding a third Zoom this week. Please scroll down and read highlights of my four volumes of colleague testimonials that speak to who I am and what I do. Thank you for your time and attention, I know it is valuable. If you wish to contact me, I would love to hear from you (please do not "reply all").

It would be my honor to work for you as your Union President.

Respectfully,

**Susan Humanick**

humanick@csdn.org

## Teacher Testimonials for Sue Humanick, Highlights:

*"The Right Experience, Passionate Commitment and Proven Results!"*

*Sue Humanick will continue to deliver for you. With a proven track record of dedicated leadership including 22 years @ NBHS, and 7 years as your union Vice-President, I, among others, have witnessed Sue's tenacity in action.*

*Whether it's advocating at board of education meetings, addressing administration, or conducting television interviews on our behalf, Sue has long demonstrated the confidence and perseverance required to continue to benefit our union members.*

*Simply stated, Sue does not succumb to administrative pressure. Over her 22 year commitment to New Britain, she has been a powerful and respected voice on behalf of so many. As a result of her approachable demeanor and her transparent and straightforward communication style, Sue will continue to always be there, advocating for us.*

*Let's be there for Sue on Election Day!" - J. Gomulinski, Pulaski*

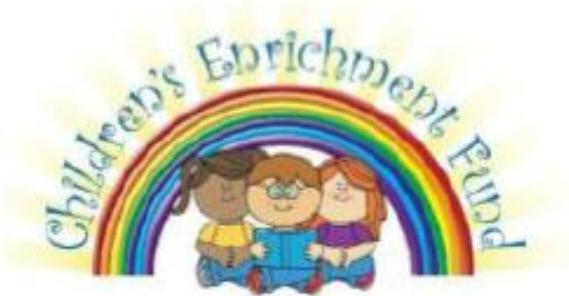
*"I have known Sue Humanick for about 20 years, both as a colleague and as a friend. Knowing her as well as I do, I can say with confidence that she would be an amazing union president. She is intelligent and astute, able to make informed decisions and to represent the membership honorably. She is experienced and knowledgeable, deeply familiar with the intricacies of our contract and union operations. And she is tactical and tough, just the sort of person you want on your side. Sue Humanick was born for this position." - T. Wankerl, NBHS*

*"You absolutely have my support and honestly, I can't imagine anyone not supporting you. The admin you are referring to, didn't damage your reputation. People knew to take any word of his with a grain of salt. Your integrity, determination and approachability speak for themselves. Although I personally have never filed a complaint, I do keep up with union news and, with thirty years of work experience in the District, I am very confident that you will make an excellent President. I am glad you are running for office." - S. Santiago, NBHS*

*I wanted to reach out to extend my excitement at seeing you as a candidate for President of the NBFT. I am a first-year teacher at a big school, and during a challenging time in our town, state, and country. It has been an incredibly arduous year. But from the very beginning, you Sue made sure I knew who you were and where to find you if I ever needed anyone to ask questions to, and to learn from, as a strong and intelligent teacher. I have had the pleasure of learning from your work with students during my observations as a first-year teacher, and I chose you because you had a reputation for being the best of the best, and being incredible with student engagement and transitioning as well as rigor development in challenging students in unique ways. I learned from your teaching that to be good, means creating not just a welcoming and challenging environment for your students, but also to create that same environment for your coworkers. I myself, as well as many others have always come to your door, not afraid to speak about our concerns and questions knowing you had an unbiased ear, and a calm demeanor no matter what. I appreciate you Sue and all you do for me, and I am looking forward to supporting you in your campaign!" - J. Massicotte, NBHS*

*"Since I first met Sue, I have been impressed with her integrity, her tenacity, and her character. I have worked with Sue as a member of our union for the past five years. She knows our contract, she knows how to negotiate, and she knows how to hold people accountable. As a colleague, I have worked with Sue in a variety of capacities. She always maintains a focus on students; balancing instructional and SEL needs. Sue understands! She is cognizant of the ever-increasing demands and challenges of our profession; steadfast in her role as a union vice-president to protect our contract and ensure that our voices are heard. In these challenging times, with Sue Humanick at the helm, I am confident that we can continue to move forward in our partnership with Central Office in a manner that promotes the very essence of what we do, and of who we are - New Britain teachers!" - J. Pagan, Diloreto*

*"So I would just like to formally say that as a colleague, I know that you are always on our side and ready to provide the best advice and support on anything we need. When I was first hired here and you introduced yourself as our union rep, you made me feel welcome and supported; I immediately knew that I would have the necessary assistance from the union readily available. It cleared up a lot of first year stress and helped me to feel more comfortable knowing that I had an effective leader like you to work with." - M. Fornal, NBHS*



The Children's Enrichment Fund replaced a stolen and damaged bicycle for this student in Mr. Anderson's class at Slade. This young man relies on his bike to get him to school , etc. each day. PLEASE consider supporting the Children's Enrichment Fund in any way you can! Thank you!

## Two ways to sign up

### Paper Card

Get a card from your union rep and fill it out. Then interoffice to payroll.

### Electronic signup

1. Click on the link below.
2. Print the application.
3. Fill out the form.
4. Scan using copier and email it to yourself.
5. Forward scanned PDF attachment from your district email account and email it to [payroll@csdnb.org](mailto:payroll@csdnb.org)

[Click here to sign up to support the  
Children's Enrichment Fund](#)

# Application for Children's Enrichment Fund



- The fund allows teachers to request financial support for students and their families in times of need.
- The fund allows teachers to request financial support for students and their families in times of need (i.e. after a fire, renting/purchasing an instrument for a deserving child).
- Teachers can apply up to \$250 per school year

The google form to apply for funds as well as the application to support the children's enrichment fund is on our website [www.nbft.org](http://www.nbft.org)

[Click here to apply for funds](#)

## 2021-2022 NBFT Membership Meetings

- March 8
- May 10
- \*All membership meetings will be on zoom. Link will be sent out the day of the meeting from Steve.



# Presidents Message

We must reflect on a busy and productive February. Local 871 held a “walk in” to demand change and raise awareness of safety concerns within New Britain High School. While schools are a reflection of the community, we must hold high standards for rules and procedures throughout all our schools. All staff and students should feel secure in their school environment. Our middle school union leaders defended and upheld our work day conditions at one of the middle schools and resolved a lingering end of day dismissal situation. At the elementary level, we are focusing on targeting specific issues at the building level through the LLM process. The entire membership is beginning to become more engaged and advocating for your rights....very inspiring.

March is here and with that it brings more Spring-like weather but also our Mid-Year Meetings. The mid-year conference is an important point in the year for addressing concerns and reviewing results for the first half of the year. During the Mid-Year Conference, the teacher and evaluator may agree to revise goals if necessary. They also discuss actions that the teacher may take and support that the evaluator may provide to promote continued professional growth. I appreciate your work ethic and commitment to your students. I know you give it your all every day.

All the best and in Unity,

Steve  
President Local 871

## NBFT Welfare Report

By Nicole Solimine

On behalf of the entire Membership the NBFT congratulates its members for these happy occasions: Tommy Mazza (Jefferson) married and Jenna Sayers (Smalley) birth of baby girl.

Our sympathy to the family and friends of the following members for their recent losses: Lisa McAlloon (Smith) father passed, Angela Buccheri Duran (SCA) father passed, and Robbie Kass (Chamberlain) father in law passed.

## **Teachers - Please Make Yourselves Aware and Informed about the: Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) Act and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) laws being practiced in our country!**

### **What is the definition of the WEP and GPO laws?**

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) are two separate provisions that reduce regular Social Security benefits for workers and their eligible family members if the worker receives (or is entitled to) a pension based on earnings from employment not covered by Social Security.

### **How does it affect Teachers? - PLEASE READ THIS LINK BELOW!**

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/rpt/pdf/2017-R-0212.pdf>

The states that practice this law include **Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Texas**. This awful and unfair act is destroying middle class United States Citizens financially when retirement arrives!

Teachers who had careers before their teaching career and **paid 100% or (44 quarters)** into social security prior to teaching are **only entitled to 40%** of this retirement income. Why are we not entitled to what we earned?

I personally have spoken to so many teachers in my school district and many other colleagues in surrounding school districts who have **NO IDEA** what the **Windfall Elimination Act and Government Pension Offset** stands for and why its purpose was voted into congress!

I personally have had another career before I became an educator (like many of us have had) and paid social security benefits for approximately twenty four years where I earned forty four quarters which entitles me to receive my full social security when I retire. However, there are thousands of middle-class citizens that are affected by the **WEP and GPO** immensely especially **the retired and future retiring educators** that have worked for the State of Connecticut along with other public servants such as fire fighters and police officers.

As all of us plan for retirement some day. I have been personally planning my retirement and how I will meet my financial goals. If the **WEP and GPO** remains in practice, then that creates a void in my social security payment; a reduction of my **60%** of my owed monthly payment! I have known about these acts and I am in shock and frightened of how the effects of the **WEP and GPO** will affect my future when I am retired from teaching.

**Many teachers that are aware of the WEP and the GPO have the same story I do.**

The **WEP and GPO** has also affected my spouse as well. He has worked in the private sector as well prior to becoming an educator also earning his 44 quarters that he paid into social security. His second career was becoming an educator. My spouse, Charles Serravalle was an educator for the Consolidated School District of New Britain, CT, and was a member of Union Local 871. He was an educator for 35 years in the State of Connecticut. He recently retired in 2018 and **CANNOT** receive his full social security when he applies for this benefit or be reassured that we would both be financially secure if either of us passes on due to the **Government Pension Offset Act!** This is not acceptable.

Please do not let yourself be blind sighted by the **WEP and GPO** when it is too late. The time to act is now!

For the past 21 years I myself have been a member of the Union Local 871 of the New Britain, Connecticut School District. Now, I am one of the many voices speaking out in support for the people of other states, along with our state, that are and or will be deeply affected if the **WEP and GPO** acts are still being practiced when we retire. Congress needs to understand how important it is that we **vote to eliminate** these two appalling and unfair acts!

**How frightening it is that our government is taking away hard-earned income especially from middle class citizens and penalizing us for what is legally and rightfully ours!!!!**

**Please have your voices be heard and support the Repeal Act to rid these horrible laws!**

**They need to know! They should know! Especially younger teachers. Communication needs to be publicized statewide to all affected by these horrible acts so there is an understanding how important that the repeal of the WEP and the GPO gets eliminated!**

**Please - Let's work together to help Repeal the Windfall Elimination Act and Government Pension Offset acts!! Our Union Local 871 and Retired New Britain Teachers organization need to take action now!**

Hopefully all Teachers Unions across the State of Connecticut and their members that are affected by the WEP and GPO acts will work together being proactive as we fight to have our voices be heard!

Fondly,

Annie Serravalle, Educator  
Consolidated School District of New Britain, Connecticut  
New Britain Board of Education  
272 Main Street, New Britain, CT 06050  
[serraval@csdnb.org](mailto:serraval@csdnb.org) – 860-227-5289

Charles Serravalle, Retired Educator/part-time educator  
Consolidated School District of New Britain, Connecticut  
New Britain Board of Education  
272 Main Street, New Britain, CT 06050  
[serravac@csdnb.org](mailto:serravac@csdnb.org) – 860-227-9807

# NBFT Scholarship

Three \$1000 scholarships

- **CHESTER YAHN MEMORIAL**
- **SOPHIE BANASIAK MEMORIAL**
- **NINA SALTZMAN MEMORIAL**

**Who is Eligible:** High School Senior students (entering college in the fall) who are children, grandchildren and/or legal dependents of active members of New Britain Federation of Teachers are eligible. High School Senior students (entering college in the fall) of children, grandchildren and/or legal dependents of active, paid members, of New Britain Federation of Retired Teachers are eligible as well.

**Due Date:** Friday, April 8, 2022

**Scholarships will be awarded based on the following:**

1. Eligibility requirement
2. Application is complete
3. Grades (copies)
4. SAT scores/class standing (copies)
5. Written essay
6. Need
7. Two letters of recommendation



**Where to send applications:** To Jen Pagan through interoffice mail, regular mail, or drop them in my drawer in the mail room at DiLoreto 732 Slater Rd, New Britain, CT 06053.

**Questions:** email [paganj@csdn.org](mailto:paganj@csdn.org)

[Click here to get the application from our website](#)



# Scholarships



## 1. AFT Connecticut Scholarship- Application Deadline: May 1, 2022

The AFT Connecticut Scholarship Selection Committee awards two \$2,500.00 scholarships each year.

- The first scholarship is the George C. Springer Scholarship for AFT Connecticut members
- The AFT Connecticut Scholarship is for members' spouses or domestic partners or children of members.

[Click here to apply](#)

## 2. AFT Porter Scholars Program- Application Deadline: April 31, 2022

This program offers four-year, \$8,000.00 post-secondary scholarships to students who are dependents of AFT members, as well as one-time \$1,000.00 grants to AFT members.

[Click here to apply](#)

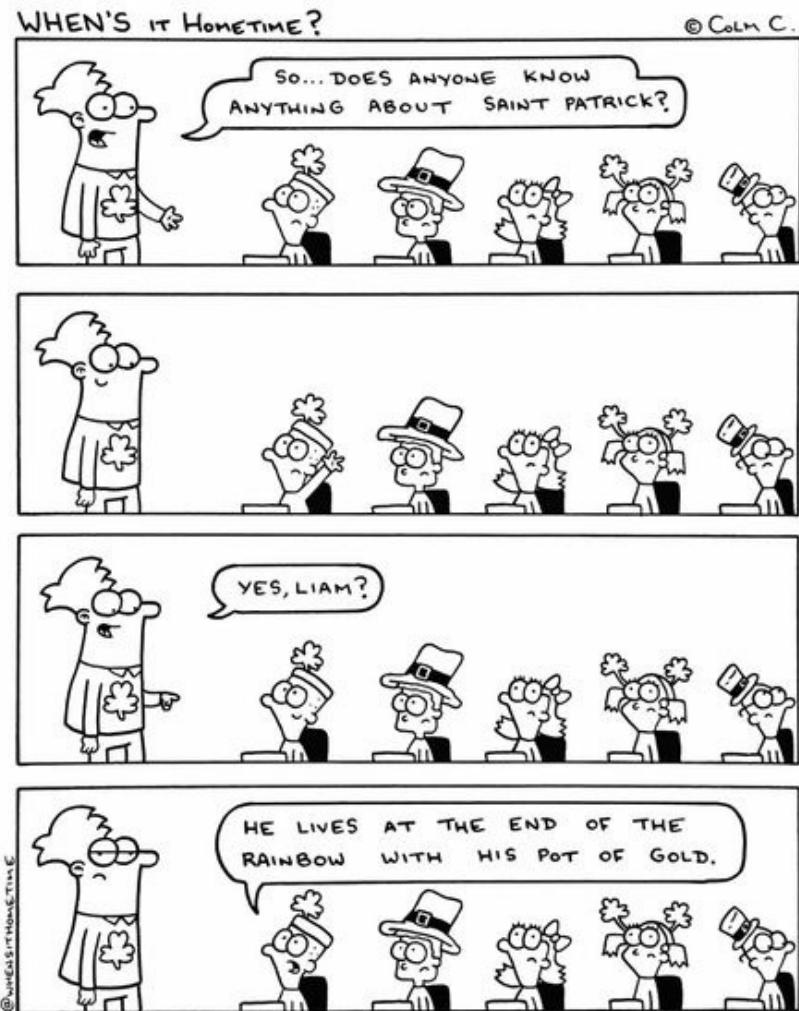
# Union Plus

Union Plus connects you with Farmers Insurance Choice where you can compare auto insurance quotes from top companies and pick the policy and coverage that may be right for you.



It's a quick way to get multiple quotes in minutes and save on your auto insurance.

[Click here to save](#)



If you would like to have something added to the spotlight for your union brothers and sisters please email local871president@gmail.com