

A newsletter for members and friends of the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association



April 2025

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Message from your OCTA PRESIDENT 25-26 Dental Rates - NOTE - OPEN ENROLLMENT is in MAY!! Congratulations to those in the April OCTA Spotlight! **OCTA Volleyball Sign-Ups - Contest is June 20th!** Become a Member of the Oswego Teachers Federal Credit Union Want to get involved in the OCTA? Become a teachers' retirement delegate Budget and Board Of Education Vote - SAVE THE DATES - May 6th & May 20th **MARY KAY Friends and Family Sale NYSTRS NEWS OCTA Newsblast: April 2025 STUFF-A-BUS OCTA Building and Officer Elections this MAY OCTA WEBSITE LINK**

Meet your 2024-2025 OCTA Officers!

















Dan Rose: OCTA VP PR

Carrie Patane OCTA President

Kim LeRoy: OCTA VP Grievance

Jess Burridge: OCTA **VP** Negotiations

Jenn Cahill⁻ OCTA VP PA

Mike Patane OCTA VP Treasurer

Message from your OCTA President, Carrie Patane



Greetings,

It is with great pride that I can share with you on behalf of the Negotiations Team that our 2024-2028 contract has officially been approved by the Board of Education!

The full contract needs to undergo a thorough revision, and once that is finalized and approved you will be notified, but until then, you may reference

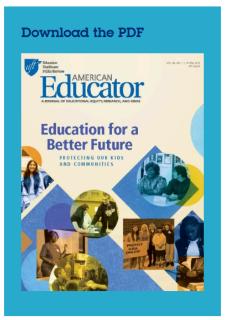
the <u>attached MOA</u> to view the pending changes. Meghan Wilson also put together this spreadsheet that you can reference which also includes the <u>payroll invoice</u> <u>stipends</u> and <u>codes</u>.

The retroactive compensation is on salary items including annual stipends that would be reported on your salary notice that you typically receive at the beginning of the year. I am hopeful that the district will be able to complete the retroactive calculations before the end of the school year.

Thank you for all of your support, your continued dedication to our district and students, and for the show of unity!

It is worth noting that the <u>American Educator</u>, a magazine written and produced by fellow unionists, focused on the future <u>in this</u> <u>month's issue</u>. We, as educators, are engrossed in the present, always intensely focused on and driven by the day to day. Most of us are living and surviving moment to moment, and are only allowed the freedom and space to think about the future during breaks of more than a day or two. Please take some time to read one or two articles in this American Educator this month. Take a few moments to <u>expand your thinking to the future</u>.

It is an honor to stand alongside you and advocate for our shared vision. Together, through our unwavering commitment and collective effort, we are building a more secure future for all.



In solidarity, Carrie

Dental Submitted by OCTA Dental Administrator, Lindsay Voigt

Dear OCTA Members: Happy Spring!

Open Enrollment will take place from May 12th - 30th!

If you need to make changes, including the addition of dependents, please reach out to Lindsay Voigt at <u>octadentalplan@gmail.com</u>. No action is required unless you need to make a change. (Your dental coverage automatically renews from year to year).

Dental Rates for the 2025 - 26 School Year:

Individual: \$2.63 per pay period Member+1: \$28.88 per pay period Family: \$57.75 per pay period Two In Unit: \$28.88 per pay period

An Important Note For <u>Soon-to-Be Retirees</u>:

Please be advised that if you would like to continue dental coverage, you MUST be enrolled as an active member first. This means that if you are currently a non-participant, you MUST enroll during May's Open Enrollment period before your official date of retirement.

Therefore, if you are retiring this year in June or July, you would need to enroll during Open Enrollment **right now**! Please note that if you are planning to retire at some other point during the next school year (before the end of the full 2025-26 school year), you will also need to enroll during Open Enrollment **right now**. Please reach out if you are retiring and have not already been in touch in order to get your paperwork done and in order and ensure a smooth transition for your dental insurance into retirement!

If you have any questions regarding this or any OCTA Dental related matter, please feel free to reach out to Lindsay Voigt at <u>octadentalplan@gmail.com</u>.

CONGRATS TO ALL WHO SHARE THE MARCH OCTA SPOTLIGHT!



Alex Blodgett became a Teaching Assistant because of his strong passion for helping others and his desire to have a positive impact. A longtime resident of Auburn, Alex shares his home with his two dogs—Koda, a six-year-old husky, and Kai, a two-year-old black lab. He holds an undergraduate degree from SUNY Oneonta and completed his graduate studies at SUNY Oswego. What motivates Alex is the opportunity to help others grow and succeed. Outside of work, he enjoys coaching and playing basketball, as well as creating and recording music. His favorite hobby is basketball, and he never turns down

Mexican food. We're thrilled to have Alex here at **Minetto** and wish him continued success in all he does!

Allie Yule is an Oswego native who has been teaching at Kingsford Park for 5 years. She spent her first two years in fourth grade and is currently teaching her third year of fifth grade specializing in the area of science and social studies. Allie originally planned to have a career in Sport Psychology after getting her master's at Ithaca College, but soon after she started subbing in the Oswego City School District she realized that teaching was what she really wanted to do. Allie enrolled at SUNY Oswego and the rest is history. She is a believer in lifelong learning and hopes to impart a love of learning and knowledge onto her students. Allie played softball at Mercyhurst University in Erie, Pennsylvania. Outside of school she loves to read, play trivia, and walk with her dogs, Poppy and Finnegan. Most of all, Allie enjoys time spent with her family. "I love to travel and hope to travel to all the places in the world that I have been teaching about." We are so lucky to have Allie Yule in our halls at





KPS and our fifth graders certainly agree!

Minetto Elementary would like to introduce our new Speech Language Pathologist, **Nick Masuicca**. Nick attended elementary school right here at Minetto Elementary and later graduated from Oswego HIgh School in 2017 and attended Nazareth University to obtain his Bachelor's Degree. He received his Master's degree from the University at Buffalo in 2023. Outside of teaching Nick enjoys exercising, playing golf, playing video games and spending time with family and friends. His favorite food is crab legs (a close second being pepperoni pizza). Nick is motivated by helping the students on his caseload to the best of his ability and seeing the progress they make. During his breaks Nick enjoys traveling to New Smyrna Beach in Florida to visit his father. Nick got into teaching because he wanted a career where he could help people and was stuck between speech therapy and

occupational therapy. He ultimately started out as an occupational therapy student but changed his major to speech language pathology between his freshmen and sophomore year. It brings Nick great pleasure to help others and to see the progress they make over time.

David Wilcox joins **OHS** after teaching for two years in Virginia, three years in Fulton, and eight years in Mexico. David liked taking tech classes in high school and was inspired by his tech teacher to pursue this career. He attended SUNY Oswego for Technology Education and currently teaches DDP, Photography and Computer Repair. Outside of school, he stays busy with his two kids, and also enjoys camping and paddle boarding.



FPS warmly welcomed back **Kayla Schwartz** this year after joining us about halfway through last school year. Kayla has wanted to be in education from a very



young age. She says she has always enjoyed being around kids, babysitting and getting to teach them new things. Her passion really began to soar during her sophomore year of high school when she was asked to help coach her JV level winterguard. After a few tries at other things she found her way back into education and working with kids, and she knew it was where she belonged! She has now been in the field of education for 8 years as a teaching assistant and coached for 4 years on top of that. Her favorite thing about her job is all the connections she gets to make with so many students throughout the building. Outside of school her biggest passion is baking, as

it's a great stress relief to her and something she really enjoys doing. She also loves crafting, traveling, cooking and digital art, as well as spending time with family and friends and getting to experience life with her nieces and nephew.

Meet **Megan Labosky**, the new art teacher at **Leighton School**! Ms. Labosky grew up in Binghamton, New York. At home, she has a furry friend named Knight, a grey cat who probably loves to watch her create art. Ms. Labosky studied at SUNY Oswego for both her college degrees, and she fell in love with the place so much that she lived there for 3 years after finishing school. It's like her second hometown! When she's not teaching, she enjoys sewing, crocheting, and drawing in journals. What Ms. Labosky loves most about teaching art is showing students cool new materials and working with kids of all ages. She's had lots of experience teaching, from giving swim lessons as a teenager to working in Syracuse schools. Interestingly, she first thought about being an art therapist before deciding to become a teacher. Her passion for teaching started when she was young and grew stronger after shadowing her aunt, a teacher, for a day in middle school.



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This is Kaitlyn Dexter's (OMS) first official year of teaching health with the Oswego City School District, however, she brings with her a wealth of experience from her time working with various schools throughout Oswego County. Her teaching journey began as a highschool student in Fulton. During her experience as a student she volunteered with the OCO Youth For Youth organization where she assisted mentors in delivering important discussions regarding healthy relationships and reproductive health to her peers. What started as a lighthearted experience has blossomed into a fulfilling career. Kaitlyn started her academic journey at SUNY Delhi, where she earned an Associate of Science degree in Physical Education. and then transferred to SUNY Cortland, where she completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Health Education. Her motivation as an educator revolves around one central point- enlightening students on why it is essential to preserve, protect, and enhance personal health. To this day, Kaitlyn's main motivation to teach comes from witnessing students experience their "aha" moments. Outside of the

classroom Ms. Dexter enjoys going to the gym, reading and spending time in the 1.000 Islands with family. As she gains more experience in the teaching field, Kaitlyn looks forward to participating in the New York State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. She feels this opportunity will allow her to grow as an educator while connecting with peers to enhance students' learning.

OCTA Volleyball Sign-Ups

Please fill out the Google Form if you are interested in playing! Players must be enrolled in the union they are eligible to participate in and need to work one day in the building they play for.

The google form will be used to form teams for each building. Come one, come all!

(Click on the IMAGE below to link to the Google form)



Volleyball Player Interest 2025



Believe it or not summer break is approaching, and the credit union wanted to be available to the staff for any credit union questions before the recess.

High School: Tuesday 5/6 and Tuesday 5/13 - 10:45 am - 1 pm

Charles E Riley Elementary: Wednesday 5/7 and Wednesday 5/14 - 11 am - 1:15 pm

Frederick Leighton Elementary: Thursday 5/8 and Thursday 5/15 - 10:50 am - 1 pm

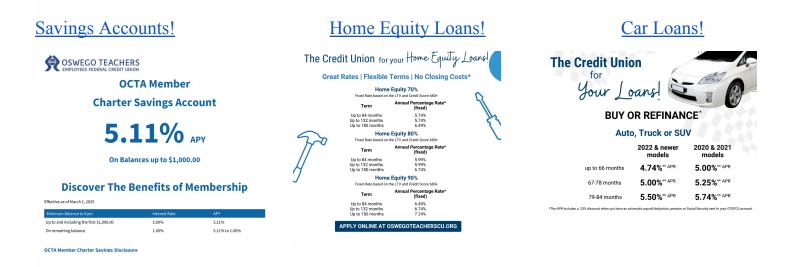
Minetto Elementary: Monday 5/12 and Monday 5/19 - 11 am - 1:20 pm

Kingsford Park Elementary: Tuesday 5/13 and Tuesday 5/20 - 11 am - 1:20 pm

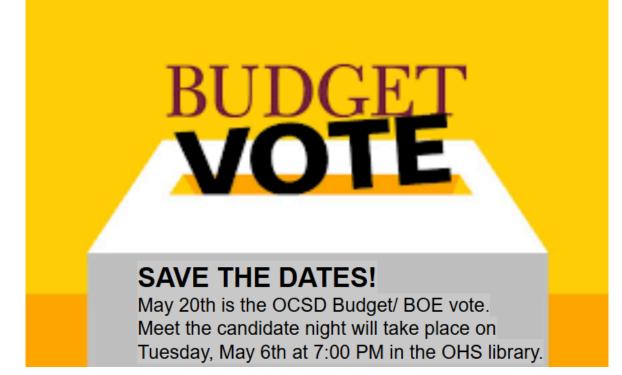
Middle School: Wednesday 5/14 and Wednesday 5/21 - 10 am - 12:50 pm

Fitzhugh Park Elementary: Thursday 5/15 and Monday 6/2 - 11 am - 1:20 pm

Oswego Teachers Federal Credit Union offers members amazing benefits including a summer club savings account that sends you paychecks all summer long!! Click on the links below to join or read more!



April 2025



MARY KA



OCTA Mother's Day MARY KAY Friends and Family Sale!

Orders due by May 15! 30% off all orders. NO TAX NO SHIPPING MARY KAY MAR

No home deliveries. Tell me the building you work in so I can get your order to you at work. Order by email at cpatane@oswego.org

(include item name, product number, color, and quantity) or order online at www.marykay.com/mrspatane .

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Help is available when it is needed most

Whether you're dealing with a specific stressful situation or would just like to speak with a supportive and empathetic voice, the <u>Peer Support Line</u> is available free to all NYSUT members and their loved ones.

This confidential helpline is staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals who want to help. Peer specialists from Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care - in partnership with NYSUT Member Benefits and NYSUT Social Services - are available Monday through Friday from noon to 8 p.m. (EST) to provide answers, resources, and support.

Connect with the Peer Support Line toll-free at <u>844-444-0152</u>, chat with a peer specialist, or send a secure private message.

Send a secure private message



PREP Seminar Registration Opens May 14

Many retirees tell us they wish they began focusing on financial and retirement planning much earlier in their lives. Our Pension & Retirement Education Program (PREP) helps active members take a proactive approach to retirement planning. Each free half-day session covers NYSTRS benefits, financial planning, Social Security, estate planning and the retirement process. The summer 2025 PREP Seminar schedule will be available May 14 on the <u>Retirement Planning/Pension & Retirement</u> <u>Education Program page at nystrs.org</u>.

Retirement Resources for Members at Every Career Stage

For New Members

We encourage new members to visit our <u>Active</u> <u>Members/New Members</u> page to learn more about their NYSTRS membership. In addition, <u>MyNYSTRS</u> allows new members to review retirement info, submit forms, and send secure messages to NYSTRS throughout their career.

For Members at Mid-Career



Mid-career members can learn about pension benefits and financial planning at a <u>Pension & Retirement</u> <u>Education Program (PREP) seminar</u>. Members can also log in to <u>MyNYSTRS</u> to send secure messages to NYSTRS, as well as check and update their beneficiaries, address and contact information. Members who worked in New York State public service prior to joining NYSTRS may be eligible to purchase prior service credit, allowing them to reach service milestones more quickly. Interested members can learn more in our publication <u>You Deserve The Credit</u>.

For Members Nearing Retirement

Our <u>Retirement Checklist</u> provides a starting point for your colleagues as they navigate the retirement process.

As they approach retirement, members can visit our <u>Active Members/Ready to Retire</u> page for additional retirement resources or to schedule a <u>Benefits Consultation</u>. The <u>MyNYSTRS Pension</u> <u>Estimator</u> will help members get a rough idea of their pension payments as they prepare to file for retirement.

STUFF-A-BUS Submitted by Laurie Kelly



I wanted to thank everyone who participated in Jeans Week. We raised \$1175 and that will buy a lot of supplies for our students.

Again Thank You!

In the 22 years that Stuff-A-Bus has been operating, the event has provided supplies for thousands of children across Oswego County. The Stuff-A-Bus drive began in 2003 as part of United Way's Success By 6 initiative to provide necessary school supplies to low-income families who are unable to purchase these items on their own.

If not for the donations, many students in Oswego County would attend classes without crayons, pencils, paper; the very supplies necessary to facilitate learning.

Stuff-A-Bus was started to fulfill two needs in our county: First, the need to bring school supplies for some families. The second need was to provide community members a day to volunteer and give back.

The annual event involves partnering with all nine school districts to ensure that all children in need of school supplies receive them—a tradition that helps our children and youth succeed.

Get involved in OCTA by becoming an OCSD Retirement Delegate!



Retirement Delegates from all New York State districts meet at the NYSTRS annual convention inSaratoga Springs, NY each year. If you become a OCSD retirement delegate, you will have the opportunity to attend this annual meeting and become well versed in the areas of retirement and retirement related benefits. You will also serve as a liaison between OCTA members and the New York State Teachers Retirement System. Contact <u>drose@oswego.org</u> for more information!



OCTA Blast April 2025

Highlights from our April 2025 OCTA Meeting **Town Hall Meeting:** The group Indivisible- Oswego County will meet at Lake Ontario Conference Center at 1:00 pm Saturday, April 12th. This will be an Oswego County Town Hall Meeting. Claudia Tenney has not yet answered the invitation, however, the group will still meet.

People are welcome to attend and peacefully voice their concerns. The group would like to see more involvement from local labor unions.

Blessings In A Backpack Jeans Week- We're thrilled to share that, thanks to your generous support during Jeans Week for Blessings in a Backpack, we raised an incredible \$1,500! Your donations will help provide food to children who might otherwise go hungry on the weekends.

Elections: 1st Vice President, 3rd Vice President, and Treasurer elections take place in May. No nominations were received at our April meeting, so these positions will be uncontested. The secretary will cast one vote at our next OCTA meeting, re-electing our standing officers. All executive positions are filled for a two-year term (July 2025-June 2027).

NYSUT Legal Plan- ALL OCTA MEMBERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE LEGAL PLAN as a gift of membership! If you are wanting to know more information about what is included in our NYSUT Legal Plan <u>click here</u>.

BOE elections and OCSD Budget vote will be Tuesday, May 20th. Jim MacKenzie & Dave Crisafulli have their terms ending June 2025. As of now, Tim Rice & Jennifer Solazzo, have reached out and are seeking our support. Petitions are due April 30th at 5PM. We will be asking each candidate that turns in their petitions to fill out an OCTA questionnaire. Please send me any questions that you would like included in the questionnaire. jcahill@oswego.org . If we have multiple candidates we will host a "Meet the Candidate Night". This will follow the public hearing on the budget and BOE meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 6th.

Health Insurance: If you are having difficulties with Aetna be sure to reach out to Assured Partners (was ENV) at (315) 641-5848. They can help you with Benefit questions, claims issues, finding providers, etc. You should also inform Amanda Hamilton at the EDC and Carrie Patane of claim issues so they can pass the information on to the members of the Healthcare Committee. IF you have reached out to Assured Partners and you still have concerns, please let us know that too.



Make sure you are using Teladoc, ask for GENERIC RX, and use Express Scripts when possible to help reduce plan costs and to lower our premiums.

Safety: Carrie is working to ensure that each building is represented at the upcoming District Safety Meeting. It is important that we gather information on any injuries—whether minor or major—that have occurred. Dr. Kilmer needs to be aware of these incidents, as we've noticed that they are sometimes underreported. (Employee's Accident Report for Workers' Compensation)

Share any safety concerns with your safety rep!CER- Ted BeersFPS-Cari JoyceFLS- Kate BowmanOMS-Dan RogersKPS- Carolyn SlobodianOHS- Gina IorioMIN- Don FronkSHARE: What are you reporting?

A. Facility Related Safety Concern (no injury to report)

- B. Facility Related Safety Issue (INJURY to Report)
- C. Safety Incident (threats or unsafe actions of others) with no injury TO STAFF
- D. Safety Incident (threats or unsafe actions of others) with INJURY TO STAFF

Include the following details:

- 1. Where specifically in the building is the concern.
- 2. Describe the concern OR incident
- 3. IF there was an injury describe the injury no matter how minor
- 4. Did you fill out the Worker's Comp Injury Form?

SAVE THE DATE: Solidarity Events

Volleyball: June 20, 2025 (It will be here before we know it **U**) Member Benefits Teacher Discounts- Click on this <u>link</u> to view teacher discounts.

FIX TIER 6 - How bad is it? Get involved!! Watch a Video

<u>Visit Fixtier6.org</u>- Visit this website to learn more about supporting fixing tier 6. Make sure you write out the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association.

Join the Fix Tier 6 Team Fixing Tier 6 is about solidarity, equity and dignity. Our work is important. Our pensions should reflect that.



Employee Assistance Program (EAP): To contact them call (315-470-7447).

The district provides members with services to help with stress management, family stress, anxiety and panic, workplace issues, communication barriers and more. The service is provided by Help People. It is a free and confidential service! Offices are located in Fulton, Liverpool and Syracuse.

*OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE: 2024-2025 Resource Guide

Know Your Paycheck Deductions:

Robert Dumas

Check your stub to make sure you are receiving the appropriate deductions for each paycheck:

FICA is social security MEDI is Medicare FEDERAL is federal tax STATE is state tax D/I OCTA is disability insurance HI10F15% is 10 month family/single health MED/DENT is your flex spending account DFBOCTIN is your OCTA Dental Insurance VISFIND = Vision individual OCTA28+ is your union dues OPL is city library contribution NYSUT = member benefits (Life ins, legal, etc.) INSREIMB = Insurance Reimbursement (in Dec) for those off step TRS= money you pay into NYSTRS

THANK YOU to our OCTA Building Leadership 24-25				
CER Ted Beers Holly Babcock	FPS Julie Tubolino Cari Joyce	KPS Mary Lynne Maxwell Hope Mazuroski	FLS Meghan Harrison Amy Armet	MIN Keri Hunter Stacie Waterhouse- Roberts
OHS Gina Iorio Heather Sugar	OMS Jeff Brown Clare Donovan	Substitutes Ed Stacy		

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Ask the Cognitive Scientist: Understanding Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom

By R. J. R. Blair, Daniel T. Willingham



How does the mind work—and especially how does it learn? Teachers' instructional decisions are based on a mix of theories learned in teacher education, trial and error, craft knowledge, and gut instinct. Such knowledge often serves us well, but is there anything sturdier to rely on?

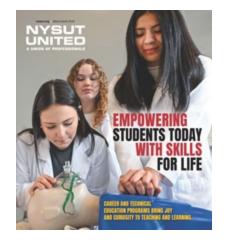
Keep up with union news! Click on the article titles below to read from our union affiliates.

NYSUT MEMBERS CREATE A COMMUNITY FOR GAMERS

TAXES & PENSION: KNOW THE RULES

NYSUT BUDGET PRIORITIES SEEK TO IMPROVE LEARNING, WORKING CONDITIONS

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TODAY WITH SKILLS FOR LIFE



April 2025

The Kids Are Not OK, But Education Innovations Provide Hope

By Carol Graham



We have an increasingly divided country, polity, and society. While this strains our family dinners and creates anxiety on the left and right, one of the most notable results is the stark decline in the well-being and mental health of our youth. They are facing deep uncertainties about the future of jobs and labor markets, being able to afford college and the consequences of not having a degree, worsening climate change, declining communities, and toxic civic discourse.1 The youth mental health crisis in large part reflects a decline in hope that has resulted from these trends. <u>READ THE REST CLICK HERE!</u>

Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!?

Click <u>HERE</u> to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents

Get Your NYSUT Digital Membership Card

Visit My NYSUT today to

access your digital card:

or scan the QR code now.

nysut.cc/digitalcard

Your NYSUT membership card is going digital! Access your benefits instantly and carry your union pride right on your smartphone. Compatible with Apple and Google Wallets, this eco-friendly update eliminates the need for physical cards while keeping you connected to our 700,000-strong community of education professionals. Prefer a printed card? You can still download and print one through your account. like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide!

Need A Quick NYSUT Membership Card?

Login here and download a PDF of your

membership card or follow the QR code in the image to the left and secure you digital card today!



To request a replacement for this card, call NYSUT at 1-800-342-9810 ext. 6224

OCTA Advocate is published by the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association, West 1st Street, Oswego, NY. **President**: Carrie Patane, **VP Grievance**: Kim LeRoy **VP Negotiations**: Jessica Burridge **VP Political Action**: Jenn Cahill, **VP Newsletter**: Dan Rose, **Secretary**: Michelle McManus, **Treasurer**: Mike Patane. Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

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