

OCTA Advocate

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



DECEMBER 2022

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Meet your 2022-2023 OCTA Officers!



Carrie Patane
OCTA President



Kim LeRoy
VP Grievance



Jess BurrIDGE
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane
Treasurer



Michelle McManus
Secretary



Dan Rose
VP Newsletter

Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane

As 2022 turns to 2023, it is important that we take time to relax, reflect and recharge.

As involved educators, we focus so intently on what is right in front of us, it is difficult sometimes to find moments to pull back, see the bigger picture, and take in the educational landscape outside of our district, across our nation.

We are all pivotal cogs in the giant educational wheel spinning from state to state and continent to continent. Don't forget to take some time each month to read an article or two from some of our national affiliate magazines to help stay informed and current with the trends and talk in education.

This month's [American Educator](#) features an article entitled [Too Many, Too Young - Why Teachers are Unifying to End Gun Violence](#). This article recounts the stories of five educators who experienced gun violence first hand and highlights the added urgency for reform. The article also offers teachers a chance to join the fight against gun violence in our schools (complete the survey at go.aft.org/szh). Please take some time to browse the [American Educator](#) as the new year dawns.

Along these same lines, it is important for educators to understand the historical context that helps shape teacher activism and collective bargaining, especially here in our own great state. NYSUT, the New York State United Teachers, has a deep rooted and rich history, and we, as teachers here, have a certain responsibility to learn more about those who came before us, and those educators who fought so hard to give us the opportunities we have today. I hope you get a chance to watch this short video on the origins of NYSUT.

NYSUT Origin Story

Thank you for all you do to make this district a better place in which to work and grow. Happy holidays, and best of luck in all that you do as we head toward the winter months.

In solidarity,
Carrie



Congratulations to December OCTA Spotlight Recipients!



Fitzhugh Park would like to recognize Mrs. Val Donovan for contributing over twenty years of service as a Kindergarten teacher here in our elementary building. When you spot Val among her students, you can instantly tell she found her calling at the Kindergarten level. She attends to her students' wide-eyed curiosity with a gentleness and confidence that can only be described as inspirational. Val has said that she teaches children "how to think." Kindergarten, after all, is a time for exploration, inspiration, growth, and connection. Val can often be found holding a hand, quietly encouraging her students, and then gently leading them down the path of lifelong learning. Mrs. Donovan is a name and a face that will be forever missed. Congratulations Val! Thank you for your dedication!

Molly Clark (CER) has been teaching in school libraries for over 22 years. Prior to that Molly worked as a home tutor and library clerk at Minetto while obtaining her Master of Library Science degree.

Molly's favorite part of being in education is witnessing the lightbulb moments when children suddenly grasp a new idea. She also really enjoys getting to witness her students' growth from kindergarten to sixth grade.

Outside of school, Molly enjoys the outdoors: running, hiking, and snowshoeing. She also enjoys traveling in support of her daughter's marathon adventures.



Jessica Leonard (Leighton) has been teaching for 15 years. What she enjoys most about teaching is that there is always something new to learn and that no two days are ever alike. Jessica also loves to follow the journeys of her students as they grow and mature. Jessica says that at Leighton, everyone is willing to step in and help out, and that Leighton staff truly aims to do what is best for students. Jessica enjoys the events that her building puts on for the students. One of her favorite quotes to live by is "Be yourself, everyone else is already taken." Outside of the classroom, Jessica is a thrill-seeker and has been skydiving three times!

Do you know an OCTA member who works hard at what they do? Someone whose efforts seem to go unnoticed? *Someone who always seems to have positive energy? Do you know an OCTA member who deserves to be in the SPOTLIGHT? Then nominate them to be cast in the monthly OCTA spotlight! This section of the newsletter and website will highlight one (or more) OCTA member(s) per month. Send the candidates name, along with a brief description of what makes them special to drose@oswego.org. Send your nomination today!*

OCTA Scholarship Committee in search of new members!

Submitted by Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc - OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs

OCTA Scholarship Committee

The OCTA Scholarship Committee is looking for volunteers. Every year, the scholarship committee organizes fundraisers (such as Jeans Week & payroll deduction) which allow the committee to award graduating OHS seniors with valuable scholarships in the spring. If you would like to participate in this year's committee, please email Korrine LaDuc & Meghan Donabella.



Jeans Week - Save the Dates:

February 13 - February 17

Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc

OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs



OCTA Newsblast December 2022

Highlights from our December OCTA Meeting

Dental News- Just a friendly reminder from OCTA Dental: Please take note of the Plan language that stipulates enrollees are entitled to two cleanings/preventative visits per 12-month period, and Visit A and Visit C of such visits need to be scheduled a minimum of 12-months and one day from each other—For example, if you went to the provider on April 20, 2022 (Visit A), then if your next visit was October 23, 2022 (Visit B), your next visit would need to be scheduled on April 21, 2023 (Visit C) or after in order to be covered—Providers always try to do their best to properly schedule and space appointments, but ultimately the responsibility rests on members to ensure that their appointments are properly spaced based upon the Plan language as described above—

Please also know that 12-month periods are all individual and based upon when you have your first covered service (For example, if your first cleaning of the year is in June, then your 12-month period is from June-June)—The 12-month period is NOT based on the school year or calendar year—

NEW AND IMPROVED: The 6-month and one day requirement between cleanings has been removed and you are no longer required to have 6-months between preventative visits, but can still only have TWO per 12-month period. This should make scheduling appointments for your 2nd visit of the year much easier for everyone, so that is a great benefit!

IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE THAT MEMBERS BE MINDFUL OF PROPER APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING AND SPACING TO AVOID DENIALS OR ISSUES.

Please feel free to reach out to OCTA Dental at octadentalplan@gmail.com should you have any questions about this or anything else dental-related!

NYSUT Disaster Relief Fundraiser (clothing sale) raised \$503.52. This money was raised from our OCTA Clothing Sale. Mike sent this money in to NYSUT.

Appointments- If you would like to meet with Carrie Patane or invite her to a meeting at your building use this link <https://calendar.app.google/cS7sbsLLfiCvnoSn6> to choose a time.

E 5. Effective July 1st each year of the contract, teachers at the top of the applicable salary schedule, who do not receive an increment provided by the schedule, will receive a lump sum payment up to \$150.00 in reimbursement for expenditure for health, dental, life, or income protection insurance premiums. In your first paycheck in December. The same SLO. Every teacher will be based on 4 Regents

Starbucks Solidarity- Red Cup Rebellion Starbucks all over have been trying to unionize. Due to this, many Starbucks are closing due to employees wanting to Unionize. If you happen to get a Starbucks gift card, when your name is asked upon ordering, don't use your name say **Union Strong**. Try not to give Starbucks gift cards if at all possible. Labor movements are important for all unions.

Chain of Command- The district has created a Chain Of Command chart for members to reference when there are questions or concerns.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QheLANDRSrIGXVQ0E8yfk5I4hYreTeSGmFDZGmg2sOA/edit?usp=sharing>

Get your teams for bowling!!!

The Bowling tournament is being run by **Carol Janice** on **FRIDAY, FEB 3rd**. (Approx times: Secondary: 2:45 -4:30 Elementary 4:15 - 6)

Volleyball- **Julie Tubolino and Ryan Lavner** will be organizing this event. Thank you!. Keep your calendars open... The tournament is scheduled for **Friday June 16th**.

Peer Support Line offered

NYSUT Member Benefits has launched the [Peer Support Line](#), a confidential, peer-to-peer, dial-in helpline free to all members and their families. Staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals, this service will provide support and referrals to callers seeking assistance on a wide array of personal, family, and work-related problems. For more information or assistance, call 844-444-0152.

OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kc9DjnHtYkQTqCKMI2iw4Krey8BFebZtAO5i1wM05Gs>

COVID Phone Numbers

OCSD Employee COVID Hotline: 315-341-2055

OCSD Student COVID Hotline: 315-341-2050

***District Safety Hotline-** If you have a safety concern the district has a confidential safety hotline. **The number is 315-341-2056.**

Know Your Paycheck Deductions:

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 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

OCTA Building Leadership 22-23

CER

Terri Stacy

Ted Beers

FPS

Erin Wilder

Julie Tubolino

KPS

Mary Lynne Maxwell

Hope Mazuroski

FLS

Michaela Kearns

Amy Armet

MIN

Crystal Mason

Amy Sullivan

Keri Hunter

OHS

Gina Iorio

Heather Sugar

Robert Dumas

OMS

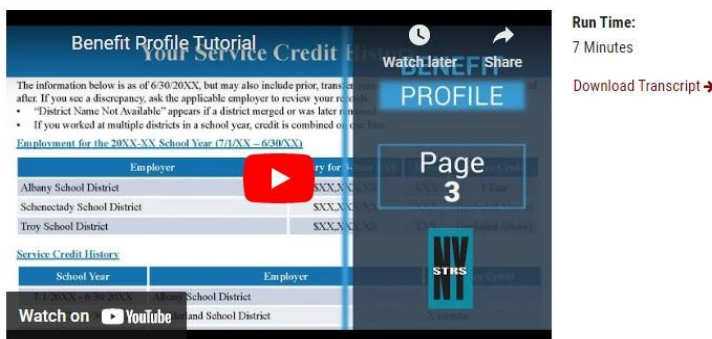
Jeff Brown

Alison Anderson

Mary Alice Brennan

NYSTRS Benefit Profiles now available!

Benefit Profile Tutorial



Your Oswego New York State Teachers' Retirement elected delegate Dan Rose attended the NYSTRS annual delegates meeting in Saratoga Springs during the first week of November. The most recent edition of your [NYSTRS benefit profile](#) was sent out to all NYSTRS members in November. Your benefit profile provides a wealth of information, and is available to all members with a [MNYSTRS](#) account. To learn more about how to read your benefit profile, view this tutorial (click on image)

Life is complicated. NYSUT Member Benefits can help.

PEER SUPPORT LINE



The Peer Support Line is a new service available through NYSUT Member Benefits that's offered at no cost to all NYSUT members and their families.



The Peer Support Line can help with:

- Finding mental health services or support groups
- Answering questions about Medicare and Medicaid
- Managing work-related stress
- Providing support to new members
- Sourcing elder care or caregiving services
- Assisting with marital, relationship or child rearing concerns
- Reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness

The Peer Support Line is a partnership between NYSUT Member Benefits and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

For more information or assistance, call toll-free 844-444-0152.

Rev/Dec 2022

Dental Benefits Reminder!

submitted by OCTA Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt



Just a friendly reminder from OCTA Dental: **Please take note of the Plan language that stipulates enrollees are entitled to two cleanings/preventative visits per 12-month period**, and Visit A and Visit C of such visits need to be scheduled a minimum of **12-months and one day from each other**—For example, if you went to the provider on June 20, 2022 (Visit A), then if your next visit was December 23, 2022 (Visit B), your next visit would need to be scheduled on June 21, 2023 (Visit C) or later in order to be covered—

Providers always try to do their best to properly schedule and space appointments, but ultimately the responsibility rests on members to ensure that their appointments are properly spaced based upon the Plan language as described above—

Please also know that 12-month periods are all individual and based upon when you have your first visit with your provider and use your coverage (For example, if you go to your provider in June, then your 12-month period is from

June-June)—The 12-month period is NOT based on the school year or calendar year of January-December—

Please feel free to reach out to OCTA Dental at: octadentalplan@gmail.com should you have any questions about this or anything else dental related!

DENTAL DID YOU KNOW?! You can create your very own Delta Dental Login and Mobile Account and in turn gain access to various helpful tools related to your dental insurance? [GO ONLINE TO MANAGE YOUR DENTAL PLAN!](#)



Resources at your fingertips

Go online to manage your plan



Whether you need to check your benefits or select a new dentist, you can do it all with Delta Dental's online tools.

Create an account

What you can do:

- Check your plan details and eligibility.
- Browse claim history.
- Download plan documents.
- Find an in-network dentist.
- View your member ID card or print a paper copy.
- Update your settings to paperless.



Try it out: Go to deltadentalins.com and choose **Log in** to create an account or log in to your existing account.

Tip: Access your benefits info on mobile, tablet or desktop!

OCTA Bowling Tournament



*Friday, February 3, 2023
(SAVE THE DATE!)
Lighthouse Lanes*

Start thinking about your team of four and a team name! (Teams of four will play two games.)

Secondary: Arrive at 2:45 and start playing at 3.

Elementary: Arrive by 4:15 p.m. and start by 4:30.

Union offers student loan debt webinars

If you're confused about [student loan forgiveness programs](#) — or in a panic over the start-up of federal student loan payments in January, you're not alone.

Sign up for one of NYSUT's free online [student loan webinars](#), where a Cambridge certified student loan counselor will provide updates and help you get on track. The next webinar will be on Jan. 10.



Mental health services needed stat

Higher ed union leaders urgently made the case this week for [more mental health services at college campuses](#). They say sky-high counselor caseloads must be addressed for the sake of students and staff, and those services must be available on-campus, not just farmed out as telehealth services. “It’s worth underscoring how much of a refuge campuses can be for so many of our students,” PSC’s James Davis says.

December 23, 2022

NYSUT WRAPPED 2022: Year in Review

Source: NYSUT Communications



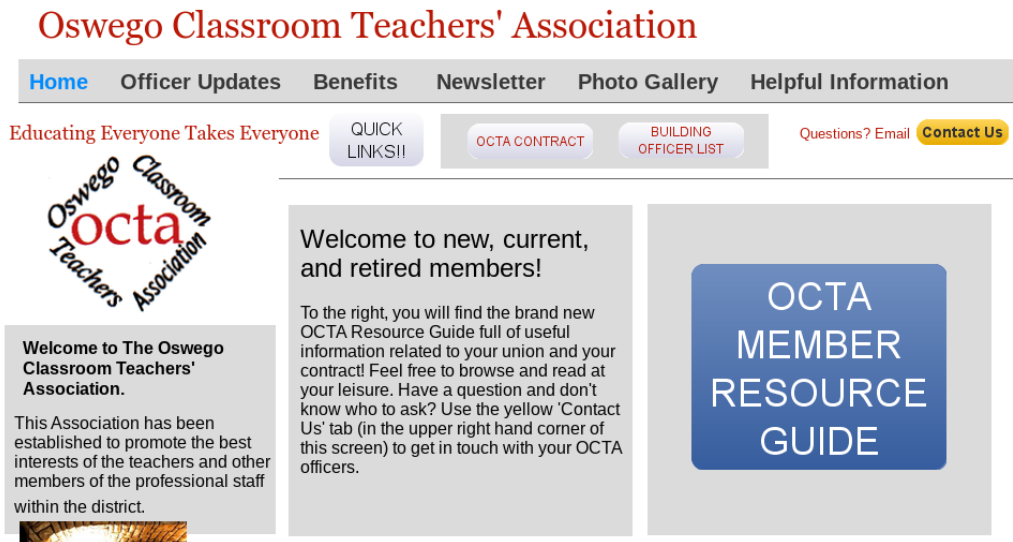
2022 was a remarkable year for our union. Together, we endured tragedies and enjoyed triumphs. Yet, through it all, NYSUT members stood strong in solidarity. If there's one theme that sums up 2022, it's that unity is a force more powerful than division, and our unity as a union gives us strength.

[Here's a quick look at just a few major stories from 2022.](#)



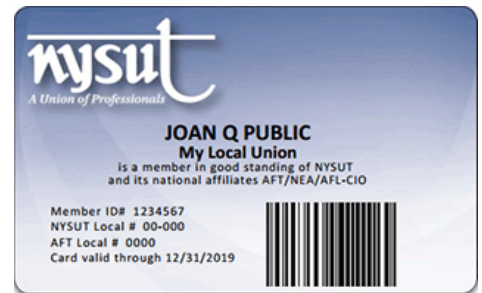
Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!!??

Click on the screenshot of the homepage below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents 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.](#)



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 Burrige **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.

