

OCTA Advocate

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



February / March 2023

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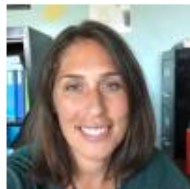
Meet your 2022-2023 OCTA Officers!



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

It has been nearly 250 years since our country's founding and in this time teaching and education have taken many giant leaps forward.

Recently though, Gov. Ron DeSantis (Florida) has challenged many of the basic principles and freedoms associated with public education and what it means to be a part of the United States school system, enacting a new law restricting educators' distribution of "harmful materials" to minors and charging teachers who break this vaguely defined offense with up to 5 years in prison and thousands of dollars in fines.

In response to this new law imposed by DeSantis, teachers in Florida have begun to remove possible harmful literature from the shelves of their classrooms and adjust their lessons to include less focus on race and gender.

With more than 2,500 books currently on the PEN America's Index of School Book Bans, censorship, it seems, is alive and well in America.

As educators, it is our duty to ensure that students maintain an atmosphere of learning which includes diverse and unique perspectives and a wide range of opportunities to explore the values of equity, empathy and democratic ideals.

Most of all, this learning environment should be free and clear of political agendas and culture war. I hope you will [read the article written by AFT president Randi Weingarten entitled: A Torrent of Censorship](#) and think further about the repercussions and implications of the actions of DeSantis and others.

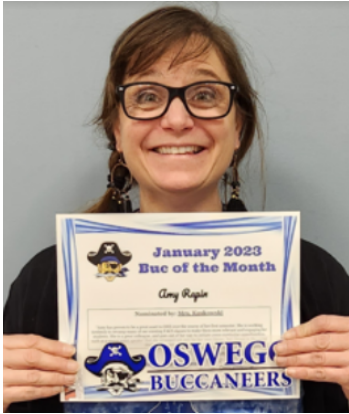
Our students deserve to learn without fear of censorship or restriction and in an environment that is welcoming and safe, nurturing and non-judgemental. We, too, deserve the freedom to teach without fear of retribution or restriction.

We must not stay silent on this.

In Solidarity,
Carrie

PS: Remember to [Sign up now for one of NYSUT's virtual student loan workshops](#), scheduled for March 7, 18, 28 or April 27.

Congratulations to our most recent OCTA Spotlight Recipients!



Amy Rapin has proven to be a great asset to the OHS over the course of her first semester. She is working tirelessly to revamp many of our existing FACS classes to make them more relevant and engaging for students. She is a great colleague, and goes out of her way to initiate cross-curricular opportunities, such as a recent guest speaker that she arranged not only for her own classes, but classes in the social studies and math departments as well. Thank you, Amy, for making life at the Oswego High School better and better each day!

Kate Bowman has been teaching for 17 years (eleven years in Pre-K and six in 6th grade). Kate says that her favorite part of teaching are the relationships and connections she is able to make and build with students. She loves being able to have an impact on the lives of her students. There is nothing more rewarding to Kate than watching the growth and maturity that occurs over the course of the school year. Kate especially enjoys the colleagues she has met at Leighton. Kate says that Leighton has a very close staff and everyone is invested in the growth and success of the students and the school. The two quotes Kate lives by are: "We can do hard things" and "Live less out of habit and more out of intent." Kate loves to spend time in and on the water. She can often be found hanging out by her pool, kayaking on the Oswego River and Lake Ontario or boating and spending time at her family cottage on the St. Lawrence. Kate has also gone white water rafting on the Black River several times. Kate has also been in charge of our Student Council and Safety Patrol for a number of years.



Catherine Celeste has taught 17 years at the Oswego High School (local biology/Regents and Honors Living Environment) and is presently in her 13th year of teaching at OMS (Life Science/Accelerated Science). She feels that the most rewarding thing about teaching is witnessing students engaged in learning from a well crafted activity. Catherine loves what she teaches and truly enjoys creating well rounded lessons that students enjoy. She also finds it very rewarding when she hears back from students who end up going into a science field, particularly in environmental or sustainable studies (as she was the environmental club advisor for years and this was her major at the University of Connecticut). Catherine's favorite interest outside of school (or is it?) would be travel, specifically to locations with vast landscapes and few observable human interference. When she retires, she hopes to visit many more unscathed locations before they are gone.

Caitlyn Krueger was born and raised in West Hartford, CT. She worked MANY hours with our KPS fifth and sixth grade chorus students to present an AMAZING musical production of Annie Kids this year. The students learned choreography and memorized their parts and songs for the performance. Caitlyn has been teaching for two years. This is her first year here at KPS. Her favorite thing about teaching is being able to see the progression of student development throughout the grade levels. "It's so exciting to see students' personalities grow. I also have the opportunity to offer students a unique experience . . . I've always loved seeing students open up in music, and seeing a different side of them that might be more hidden in other subjects." Caitlyn is a graduate of Syracuse University. She loves to read and will take any opportunity to sit down with a good book. She is also learning how to golf. Caitlyn enjoys learning new languages and traveling to new places. Outside of school, she volunteers at Safe Haven. When asked what advice she would give to new teachers she replied, "Be the person you would've wanted as a teacher when you were younger . . . I would also emphasize the importance of taking time to get to know your students and their interests, as well as making time for them and what they need day by day." KPS is certainly lucky to have Caitlyn Krueger contributing to our musical program!



Shane Evans teaches Special Education at the Oswego High School. He is willing to take on any position thrown his way and works with a variety of grade levels and subjects. He goes above and beyond to ensure that his students are successful in all areas. He spends countless hours during his planning, lunch and after school to meet with students to review for tests, and improve their grades. He also assists with coaching the Tennis teams and coached bowling this year. He is a phenomenally hard worker and supportive co-worker. He is truly an asset to Oswego High School!

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, picture and a brief description of what makes them special to your building president.*



Want to run for the OCTA Executive Board?

If elected to one of the 7 OCTA Executive board positions, you will be asked to attend monthly union meetings as well as annual union leadership conferences, act as a liaison between the OCTA and your building membership, promote union activism in the schools and the Oswego Community, and perform the roles and responsibilities associated with your unique position on the executive board.

Currently, there are 3 positions up for reelection: 1st Vice President, 3rd Vice President and treasurer. Read below for more information (*italicized text is from the OCTA Constitution*):

The officers of the executive board of this Association shall consist of a PRESIDENT, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT, SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT, THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT, FOURTH VICE-PRESIDENT, TREASURER and SECRETARY.

1. *Eligibility: Any member shall be eligible to hold office in this Association who is tenured and has been an active member in the representative assembly for at least one year immediately prior to election.*

- a. *Elections will be held as follows: The President, 2nd Vice President, 4th Vice President, and Secretary in even years and the 1st Vice President, 3rd Vice President, and Treasurer in odd years on the third Thursday in May, and the officers will be elected when they have received a simple majority of the votes cast from the general membership by written ballot in that election.*

In the event that all candidates are unopposed, the secretary may cast one ballot.

*Please see your building president or vice president to obtain more information on this leadership opportunity!

February 2023

Highlights from our February OCTA Meeting



***Meetings-** If a member is in a meeting with an administrator and feels that the meeting is heading in a disciplinary direction, the member can stop the meeting and ask for a representative to be present.

***NYSUT CTLE Seminars:**

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/certification/webinars>

You can receive graduate course credit for these courses. Be sure to get pre-approval.

***External PD** - The external PD fund still has over \$10,000. There have been glitches with forms and they are trying to streamline the process.

***Mentoring** - Contact for the mentor reflections? Bev DeLong will be transferring this to Deanna Crisafulli

***FUNDRAISING: The Bowling Tournament raised \$1712 for The Michelle Wink Scholarship!!**

***VOTE-COPE Online Donation Form for Current Employees:** We must help support our Tier 6 members! <https://www.nysut.org/my-nysut/reference/toolkit/member/political-action/vote-cope>

***BOE Members whose terms are up in June:** Dr. Lisa Glidden, Mrs. Pamela Dowd & Dr. James MacKenzie (Lisa Glidden would like the term to extend to 5 years).

***5 Public Library Focus Group Participants Needed:** Please email jcahill@oswego.org to participate! The Oswego Public Library is collaborating with Fast Forward Libraries, a consulting group hired to compile our new strategic plan that will provide our library with key insight on how to enhance current library services and further explore new innovative and inclusive ones.



In the focus group you can expect to talk about:

- Aspirations for our community
- The challenges you face in reaching those aspirations
- What needs to change in the community to reach those

aspirations

***Blessings in a Backpack craft show:** March 11th from 10-4 at the Elk's Lodge - 132 W. 5th St.. Pulled pork dinners are available for purchase. If you are interested in dinner, let Michelle McManus know. If you'd be willing to donate a basket, a gift card or even items that can be used in a basket, let me know. Tables are available for \$30. Blessings In A Backpack is celebrating its 10th year of feeding Oswego's Students. Each week 400 Bucs receive a bag of food for the weekend.



***District Safety Hotline: The number is 315-341-2056.** If you have a safety concern the district has a confidential safety hotline. (Students and families can call this number too! Feel free to share.) There is also a BUTTON at the top of the oswego.org website that says "TIP LINE". Students need to be made aware of this so they can report any safety/bullying issues.



CNY AREA LABOR FEDERATION
NIGHT AT THE SYRACUSE CRUNCH

FRIDAY, MARCH 31
VS BELLEVILLE SENATORS
7 P.M. // UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY ARENA

Bring Non Perishable Food items
to donate to Feed Our Vets
TICKETS ONLY

\$18
TO ORDER TICKETS:

Tickets available at the CNY Area Labor Federation office.
Email cnyalf@gmail.com

Crunch Tickets: Email Jennifer Cahill
jcahill@oswego.org if you are interested in attending.

Oswego Anticipated Foundation Aid:

An increase in our foundation Aid is due to a lawsuit to fully fund foundation aid. We will NOT get nearly this much next year. We will hit the fiscal cliff in Spring of 2024.

Appointments- If you would like to meet with Carrie Patane or invite her to a meeting at your building use this link

2023-24 Executive Budget

DISTRICT:	OSWEGO			
COUNTY:	Oswego			
NYSUT Regional Office:	Central NY-Syracuse			
	Enacted Budget 2022-23	Executive Budget 2023-24	Change	Percent Change
Foundation Aid	28,694,846	36,586,560	7,891,714	27.50%
(High Impact Tutoring Setaside* within Foundation Aid)	-	827,533	827,533	n/a
(Community Schools Setaside within Foundation Aid)	-	-	-	n/a
Full Day K Conversion Aid	-	-	-	n/a
Universal Prekindergarten Aid	1,006,484	1,431,271	424,787	42.21%
Transportation Aid w/Summer	3,385,517	3,675,795	290,278	8.57%
BOCES Aid	4,493,472	6,041,046	1,547,574	34.44%
Special Services Aid	-	-	-	n/a
Private Excess Cost Aid and Public High Cost Aid.....	973,803	1,664,778	690,975	70.96%
Hardware and Technology Aid	69,681	69,681	-	0.00%
Software, Library & Textbook Aid	290,653	288,650	(2,003)	-0.69%
Charter School Transition Aid	-	-	-	n/a
Operating Reorg. Incentive Aid	-	-	-	n/a
Academic Enhancement Aid	-	-	-	n/a
High Tax Aid	-	-	-	n/a
Suppl. Public Excess Cost Aid	-	-	-	n/a
Building Aid & Building Reorg Incentive	4,714,473	9,202,622	4,488,149	95.20%
GRAND TOTAL STATE AID	43,628,929	58,960,403	15,331,474	35.14%

<https://calendar.app.google/cS7sbsLLfiCvnoSn6> to choose a time.

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>

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

CALL TO REPORT COVID POSITIVE CASES! We no longer need to call to report symptoms. You can call for advice if you like, but it is not required.

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.

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

Substitutes

Ed Stacy

Ready to Retire



If you're getting ready to retire, this is your one-stop shop for all items related to the NYSTRS retirement process.

Contact Us →

(800) 348-7298, Ext. 6250

communit@nystrs.org

CLICK ON EITHER IMAGE TO TRAVEL TO THE NYSTRS WEBSITE TO READ MORE!!

This is a big life event, so do the homework necessary to make informed decisions about your retirement.

First Steps

Review these publications, web pages and videos early in the process.

- [Looking to the Future Stage 3: Retirement is Within Reach](#)
- [Retirement Countdown Video Series](#)
- [Retirement Planning FAQs](#)
- [Countdown to Retirement](#)
- [NYSTRS Retirement Checklist](#)
- Video: ["The Retirement Process"](#)

Use the [MyNYSTRS Pension Estimator](#) to calculate estimates under various scenarios. The online estimator uses your most-recent earnings and service credit information to estimate your pension using various dates of retirement and earnings projections. Login to MyNYSTRS and visit the My Retirement > Pension Estimate page.

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!

New York needs a “new deal” for public higher education



As the 2023 legislative session begins, our state leaders must craft a “new deal” for public higher education. One that offers New York state students access to learning at a top-rated public college or university without amassing thousands of dollars in debt.

To put the state on a path toward achieving that goal, New York State United Teachers is calling for a \$4.7 billion investment in public higher education. Hundreds of NYSUT activists traveled to Albany in February to bring that message to lawmakers during the union's Higher Education Lobby Day.

Although SUNY, CUNY and community colleges received historic funding increases in last year's state budget, the institutions still face great need due to years of underfunding. NYSUT calls for funding to substantially increase the number of full-time faculty and increase pay for adjuncts.

The union also supports increased funds for student mental health supports since many students face steep financial and personal difficulties, including food insecurity. These are problems that have only worsened since COVID-19.

The additional funding would expand access for students of color, first generation attendees and students whose family incomes fall well below the state average. The move would help to foster economic mobility, reverse economic disparity and provide more students with the skills and supports they need for future success.

[READ THE REST](#)

CHECK OUT ALL YOUR UNION MEMBERSHIP HAS TO OFFER!

When you're planning for the future, what's at the top of your list?

- A comfortable nest egg for retirement
- Providing for your family
- Purchasing a new home
- Home improvement
- Purchasing a new vehicle
- Travel and entertainment

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs to help turn those dreams into reality.



When it comes to saving you money, protecting your family and helping you plan for the future, NYSUT Member Benefits has a variety of programs and services to help with your goals. Whether you are just starting out on your journey, well into your career or enjoying a well-deserved retirement, there is a Member Benefits-endorsed plan that may be of assistance featuring value-added extras unavailable to the public.

Get started by first bookmarking the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org. There, you will find numerous tools and resources available to you as a NYSUT member – including a **Financial Learning Center** with articles designed to help educate you on financial decisions and topics. Member Benefits also endorses important **legal and financial services** along with an **online savings program** featuring some of today's most competitive interest rates.

Next up would be looking in the "Shopping, Travel & Personal" section of our site for **MB Discounts & Deals**. This program utilizes the nation's largest private discount network to provide NYSUT members with exclusive access to savings of up to 50% on restaurant dine-in or take out, groceries and food delivery, clothing and shoes, hotels and flights, car rentals, theme parks, vehicle maintenance, and much more.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,
visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org
or calling 800-626-8101.

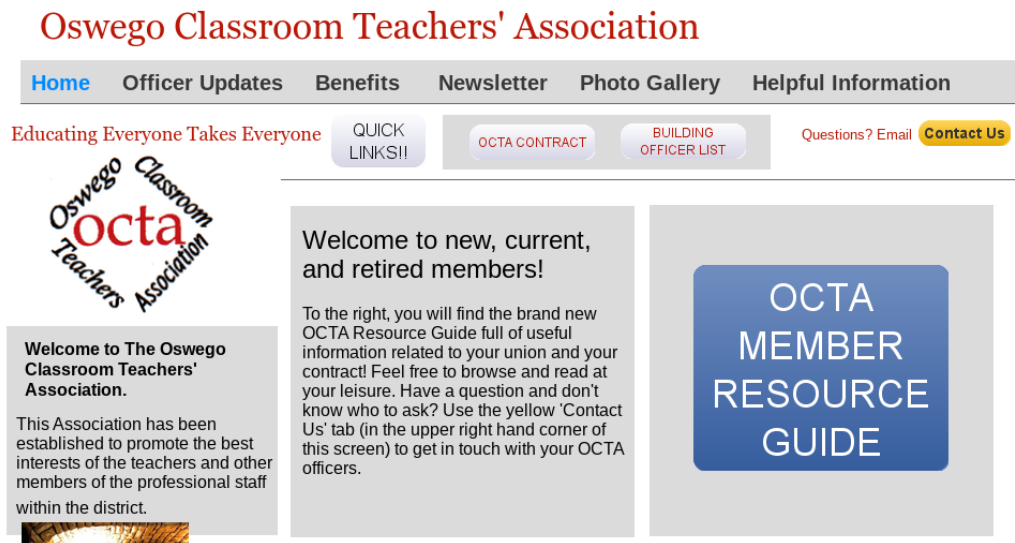


For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Mar-Apr 2023

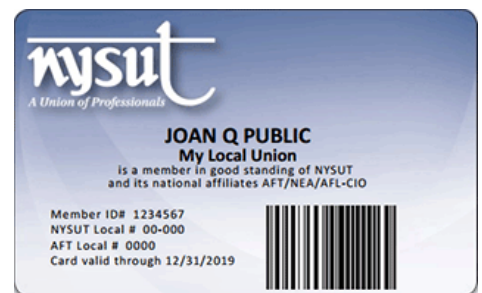
Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!!!?

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 Burrridge **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.

