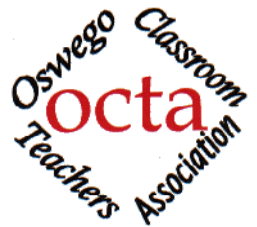


OCTA Advocate

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



February 2022

Use the following Table of Contents to navigate this month's ADVOCATE!!

Click on the bookmark to jump to the article. Click on the OCTA ADVOCATE hyperlink in the page header to navigate back to this table of contents.

[Message from your OCTA PRESIDENT](#)

[Congratulations to February OCTA Spotlight Winners!](#)

[Every School Building Needs a Nurse](#)

[America's Parents Express Overwhelming Support for Teachers, Their Unions and Public Education](#)

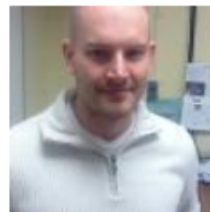
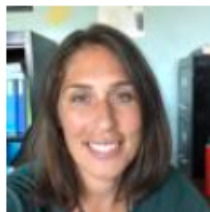
[Q: Where can I find the new OCTA Contract?](#)

[Questions about the retirement system of which you are a part](#)

[NYSUT MEMBER Benefits](#)

[OCTA Newsblast January 2021](#)

[LINK to OCTA Webpage](#)



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

Thank you to my friend and fellow OCTA Member Lisa McPherson for sharing this poem recently. May these words echo in your heart and resound in everything you do this year.

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach.

Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another Soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely.

It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good.

What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.

One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your Soul.

Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. The light of the Soul throws sparks, can send up flares, builds signal fires, causes proper matters to catch fire.

To display the lantern of soul in shadowy times like these -- to be fierce and to show mercy toward others; both are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity.

Struggling Souls catch light from other Souls who are fully lit and willing to show it.

If you would help to calm the tumult, this is one of the strongest things you can do.

There will always be times when you feel discouraged.

I too have felt despair many times in my life, but I do not keep a chair for it. I will not entertain it. It is not allowed to eat from my plate.

In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbor and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for.

~Clarissa Pinkola Estes www.clarissapinkolaestes.com

WORDLE



Have you been bitten by the WORDLE Bug?

Try this SPECIAL wordle: <https://mywordle.me/?word=qbwji>

[Click Here for the official Wordle Website](https://www.wordle.com/)

CONGRATS TO ALL WHO SHARE THE FEBRUARY OCTA SPOTLIGHT!



Carolyn Slobodian has been teaching Kindergarten at **Kingsford Park Elementary** since 2012. Besides instructing young learners and assuming the role of OCTA building rep, Carolyn has served on many committees including the safety committee, building liaison and her most recent endeavor - the Holiday Giving Committee where she put in countless hours outside of school to make sure that KPS students and families had a fantastic Christmas. Carolyn has a huge heart and her efforts and kindness do not go unnoticed. When asked what she loves most about her job, she replied, "I love being able to show a student how learning can be fun and have moments to be silly with my students. I get to know students as individuals, learn about their families and become a part of so much more than just being their teacher. Watching my children grow and make progress over ten months is the most magical time that I get to be a part of as a person."

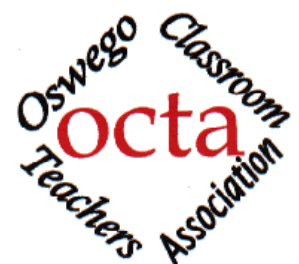
Kathy Auyer began her career in the OCSD on September 1, 1985 and worked for 19 years as a School Nurse-Teacher at Minetto Elementary. Kathy's next stop on her career path was as a School Nurse at Lanigan Elementary in the Fulton City School District (5 years) before returning to the Oswego City School District in 2009. Kathy has been working at **Charles E. Riley** as a School Counselor for thirteen years now. Kathy has dedicated her career to trying to make a difference in the lives of our students everyday, and she has been the driving force behind CER's Blessings in a Backpack fundraising efforts. Even as student numbers and needs have grown over the last few years, CER has been able to increase the number of families to which we have been able to distribute. Kathy has spent many days and hours checking in on families and delivering food and supplies. Kathy never stops checking in on our students and their families but always has time for fellow staff members. In her own words: "I am also blessed to work with the best colleagues."



Sue Roik is currently an eighth grade math teacher at **Oswego Middle School** completing her 32nd year in the education profession. She is an Oswego City School District graduate who began her teaching career in the Hannibal School District and has worked for the OCSD for the past 16 years. Sue has made math instruction engaging by using "flipped learning" to shift instruction to a learner-centered model. Sue is a patient teacher who genuinely cares about her students. Outside of the classroom, Sue enjoys spending time with her family, downhill skiing, boating, running, and training her Goldendoodle, Nala, to become an emotional support animal.

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. All nominees and nominators will receive a SPECIAL GIFT from OCTA! Send your nomination today!*



From the Front Lines: Every School Building Needs a Nurse

by Liza Frenette

COVID-19 is nearing the two-year mark, and school nurses are nearing exhaustion with the extra demands it has put on their work.

“The job has changed immensely, state testing has increased, psych-social issues have increased, and now COVID,” said Jody Barnes, a school nurse with the North Syracuse Education Association.

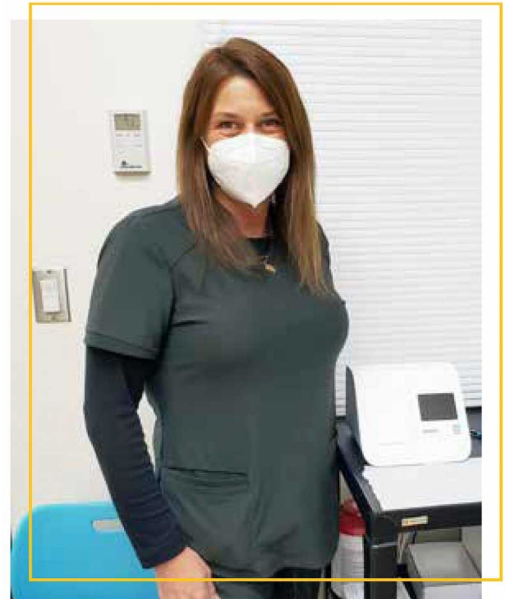
“Fifty percent of our job is now related to COVID. We start our day reviewing emails, COVID results and making follow-up phone calls. We have referred 593 students for COVID testing.”

That work is on top of treating injuries; handing out medications for asthma, diabetes or ADHD; testing eyesight and hearing; calling parents when a student is out sick; tracking required physicals; approving athletes for sports participation; tube feedings, catheterizations, and more. In nearby Fayetteville-Manlius, school nurse Kimberly Welling agreed.

“We have a lot more demands, more fragile students with serious health needs, and also more responsibilities with COVID,” Welling said. She and Barnes both serve on NYSUT’s Health Care Professionals Council. Burgeoning responsibilities like these are why the statewide union’s Future Forward Task Force recommends a renewed call for legislation requiring a registered nurse in every school building.

“We are 100 percent on board to have a school nurse in every building,” said Cynthia Bennett, a school nurse in Queens and school nurse representative for the United Federation of Teachers. “The nurses’ spirits are broken.”

Even before the coronavirus pandemic there were not enough permanent nurses in the city’s public schools. Massive numbers of nursing positions have been filled with agency nurses, many of them right out of school without training, said Bennett, adding that agency nurses do not perform the detailed information logging and tracking required by school nurses.



[READ THE REST](#)

Press Release



America's Parents Express Overwhelming Support for Teachers, Their Unions and Public Education

Amid Pandemic, Parents Say Neighborhood Public Schools Are Crucial to Help Their Children Recover and Thrive

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

WASHINGTON—A supermajority of U.S. parents give their public schools and teachers top marks for their Herculean efforts to respond to the challenges of COVID-19, [fresh polling shows](#), with perceptions of teachers unions soaring to record highs.

Black parents and parents in urban areas in particular feel that teachers and their unions have played an overwhelmingly positive role, and they blame the virus—rather than the professionals charged with their kids' care—for difficulties during the pandemic.

Overall, 72 percent of parents say their school provides excellent or good-quality education, and 78 percent endorse the quality and performance of their teachers, up 7 points from 2013, according to a new national survey by Hart Research Associates and Lake Research Partners.

Teachers unions are seen by parents as a more positive force in education today than prior to the pandemic, mirroring public polling conducted over the past year and tracking [record high support](#)

([link is external](#))

for the labor movement as a whole.

AFT President Randi Weingarten said the survey confirms what she has seen in her months of school visits throughout the country. “Parents value educators’ heroic actions to help their kids through COVID and view them as partners to keep schools open safely and deliver the social, emotional and academic support kids need.”

“This polling shows the virus is our enemy, not each other. Parents are saying teachers are heroes for their efforts during this pandemic and they deeply value how their public schools have gone above and beyond to help their kids recover and thrive,” she said.

“Some on the far right have tried to exploit this crisis to usher in a shameful new chapter of teacher bashing, but they’re failing dismally. Parents are public school proud, and they are standing with the community, teachers and their unions—not only in defense of public education but also to address inadequate school funding, students’ progress during COVID, lower class size, and the conditions necessary for academic recovery, including enough counselors and nurses and adequate teacher pay.” [READ THE REST](#)



Q: Where can I find the new OCTA Contract?

We have uploaded the searchable PDF version of the new OCTA contract to the Personnel Shared Drive folder, 'Contracts', and then select 'OCTA'. You can click on the Table of Contents to go to that section and then click on the outer edge of a contract page to

go back to the TOC. This works best after downloading the document but may work in the browser, depending on the platform used when viewing.

Submitted by: Heidi Sweeney, EdD

Executive Director of Secondary Education and Personnel

Questions about the retirement system of which you are a part (New York State Teachers' Retirement System: NYSTRS)?

Read the NYSTRS Active Members' Handbook! This Active Members' Handbook is intended to help working and vested NYSTRS members better understand their retirement benefits. It's an important part of our commitment to help you make informed decisions about your future at each stage of your teaching career. Information in this important book includes: benefit options available in retirement, navigating the retirement process, transitioning to retirement, and information about contributions, loans and service credit.

[CLICK HERE TO START READING!!!!](#)



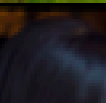
Check out all your union membership has to offer!



INSURANCE YOU CAN COUNT ON.

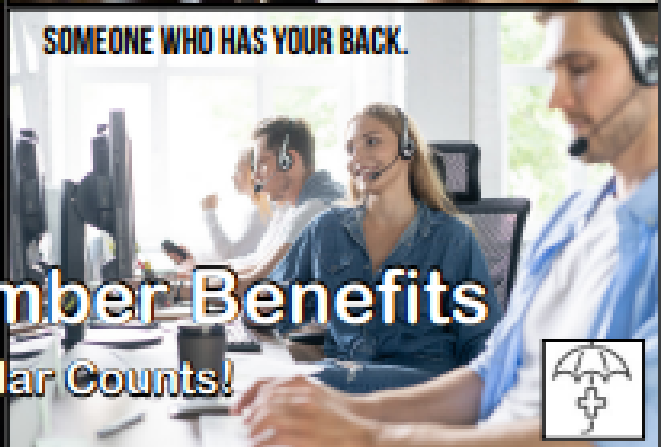


PROVIDERS YOU CAN TRUST.



**VALUE-ADDED EXTRAS YOU
CAN'T GET ELSEWHERE.**

SOMEONE WHO HAS YOUR BACK.



NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!



When it comes to protecting yourself, your loved ones, your income or your most valuable possessions, NYSUT Member Benefits has insurance programs that fit the bill. Whether you are looking for **auto & home, life, disability, long-term care, dental, vision, or pet insurance**, 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 several discounted shopping programs that can help you save on both everyday and more expensive purchases. Finally, if you ever have an issue or problem when using a Member Benefits program, our staff take great pride in their ability to quickly assist members with any concerns that may arise.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 to learn more about the endorsed programs and services available to you through your union membership.



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.

Jan/Feb 2022

OCTA Newsblast January 2022

Highlights from our January 2022 OCTA Meeting (in case you missed it!)

*Diagnostic COVID Testing is available Monday- Friday. Contact our covid hotline to get a spot. OCSD has 48 spots per day.

OCSD Employee COVID Hotline: 315-341-2055

OCSD Student COVID Hotline: 315-341-2050

* Free PCR testing is being offered at SUNY Oswego at the Marano Campus Center, each M-F from 830-3:50. People may register online, or "walk-in".

<https://app.squarespacescheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=24841628&calendarID=6384441>

*If you take a test and it is a take home test, PLEASE REPORT it if you test POSITIVE!!! Failure to report positive test results will result in flawed data. This link tells you what you need to do to let the county know of your positive test. The FORM for isolation orders is something YOU fill out now. Christina Chamberlain is getting her information from this website to know which staff and students are in quarantine. This website also has all the information related to COVID and Oswego County.

https://health.oswegocounty.com/information/2019_novel_coronavirus/isolation_quarantine_guidance.php

*Up to date guidance on quarantine rules- could change at any time!

<https://www.schoolhealthny.com/cms/lib/NY01832015/Centricity/Domain/132/2120%20QI%20Letter%20to%20Schools.1.10.22.pdf>

*Wondering how the district determines whether or not you use sick days or get COVID RELEASE TIME when you are out? Check out this document. <https://drive.google.com/.../1ZTKqW3ousnkZtmgtG8.../view...>

***NEW SUMMER INSERVICE: NO MORE SUMMER GRANTS** - The district will offer SUMMER INSERVICE for curriculum development, gap analysis, and other training. \$30,000 will be budgeted for summer offerings. Committee members will meet to propose summer offerings. Any offerings need to be scheduled and communicated by APRIL so people can plan in advance if they want to attend. If you have SUMMER PD suggestions, please reach out to your building representative(s).

1st Meeting: FEB 16th 4pm

Building	Building Rep	Alternate Rep	ADMIN
FLS	Michele Gorham	Paula Myers	Tara Clark OHS
CER	Amanda Barber		Jenni Sullivan ELE
FPS	Andrea Dumas		Sam Spaulding OMS
Kingsford	Shannon Kane	Carolyn Slobodian	Jamie Sykut TECH
Minetto	Rayna Mills	Kim LeRoy	Rhonda Bullard Special Areas
OMS	Alison Anderson	Dan Rose	
OHS	Sarah Williams	Evan Waugh	

***Updated schedule for Student Debt Webinars** that NYSUT offers to our members.

Below are the clinics that are currently open for registration: [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR WEBINARS](#)

- Wednesday, February 9th, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday, February 24th, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 8th, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday, March 24th, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

***Loan Forgiveness Info:**

AFT will help navigate Student Loan Forgiveness. Please go to this website for help. **MEMBERS ARE HAVING SUCCESS WITH THIS!!!** <https://www.aft.org/news/spreading-word-student-debt-relief-here> In a hard fought victory for public employee unions, the Biden administration has announced an overhaul of the broken Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. The changes will mean an estimated 550,000 public service workers will move closer to loan forgiveness and 22,000 will become immediately eligible. PSLF was created to ease the burden of student loan debt for a generation of workers who have dedicated their lives to serving the public and who were on the frontlines of our pandemic response. <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/pslf-limited-waiver>

Information on the steps for loan forgiveness:

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/how-to-take-advantage-of-the-biden-administrations-changes-to-public-service-loan-forgiveness-and-make-a-successful-claim-11633703342>

OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:

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

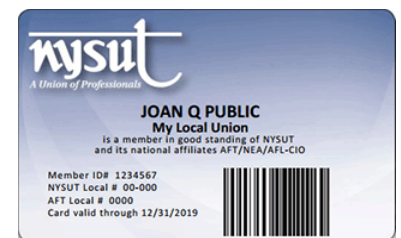
Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!?

Click [HERE](#) 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.

