

OCTA Advocate

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



May 2026

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Meet your 2025-2026 OCTA Officers!



Carrie Patane:
OCTA President



Kim LeRoy:
OCTA VP Grievance



Jess Burrige: OCTA
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill:
OCTA VP PA



Mike Patane:
OCTA VP
Treasurer



Michelle McManus:
OCTA VP Secretary



Dan Rose: OCTA VP
PR

Message from your OCTA President



As we move through the final stretch of the school year, May has brought encouraging reminders of what can happen when communities come together to support public education and when union members stay organized, engaged, and united.

[Across New York State, voters once again demonstrated overwhelming support for their local public schools during annual school budget and board elections.](#) Preliminary results showed that approximately 96% of school budgets passed statewide, while 88% of NYSUT-endorsed school board candidates won their races. Additionally, 64 NYSUT members were elected or re-elected to school boards across New York. NYSUT President Melinda Person stated, “Once again, New Yorkers made their voices heard: public schools matter.” These results reflect the trust our communities place in public schools and in the educators and staff members who work tirelessly each day to support students. Public schools remain the heart of our communities, and this strong support sends a clear message that New Yorkers value opportunity, connection, and investment in the future.

[This month also brought long-awaited progress on Tier 6 pension reform.](#) After years of advocacy, organizing, lobbying, and member action, meaningful changes are expected in the finalized state budget. For many Tier 6 members in the Teachers’ Retirement System, the retirement age is expected to decrease from 63 to 58 after 30 years of service without penalties. Other public employees are also expected to see reduced contribution rates and additional retirement system improvements. As Melinda Person noted, “This Tier 6 agreement is proof that when workers organize and stay united, change is possible.” These victories did not happen by accident. They happened because members across the state stayed informed, spoke up, contacted legislators, and refused to stop advocating for fairness for current and future public employees. While additional details will be shared once the state budget is finalized, this progress represents an important step forward for educators and workers throughout New York.

Meanwhile, AFT President Randi Weingarten recently outlined a [10-point plan focused on improving public education in the age of artificial intelligence and increasing technology use in schools.](#) Emphasizing a “devices down, eyes up, hands-on” approach, Weingarten called for limits on screen time and student-facing AI, greater emphasis on active and project-based learning, stronger support for literacy and civic engagement, and increased investment in public schools and community-based services. She also stressed the importance of protecting student well-being, educator expertise, academic freedom, and data privacy while advocating for research-based educational practices and accountability systems that move beyond standardized testing.

As we close out another busy month, I want to thank all OCTA members for the work you continue to do each day for students, families, and one another. Your dedication strengthens our schools, our union, and our community. Together, we will continue advocating for strong public schools, fair working conditions, and opportunities for all. Don't forget to sign up for OCTA's annual Volleyball Tournament on June 18 at Cheapseats! Gather your teammates, choose a team name and color, and get ready for an afternoon of friendly competition, raffles, prizes, and plenty of fun while supporting a great cause. Whether you're playing to win or just looking to enjoy time with colleagues, this is an event you won't want to miss!

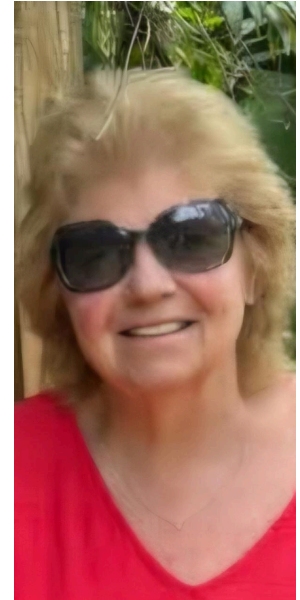
In Solidarity,

Carrie Patane - President, Oswego Classroom Teachers Association

CONGRATS TO ALL WHO SHARE THE MAY OCTA SPOTLIGHT!

Karen Fox (OHS) has been a teaching assistant in the district for 33 years in the OCSD! She is retiring this year and deserves all the praise and honor for her countless years in the district working with teachers and students. Karen has provided continual academic support for students in classes as well as being a person students look to for guidance. She has supported students in their academic growth and their overall social/emotional growth. Students will definitely miss coming to her for their occasional snacks and check-ins with her.

Additionally, Karen has been a steady support system for the cooperating teachers she has worked with. She has always conducted herself with professionalism and such a level of reliability that no matter who she is working with, it's always a successful, positive experience!



Karen plans to enjoy her long earned retirement by spending time with her husband, her cat Sammy, visiting her grandkids, attending their hockey games and traveling! Karen is always one to not sit idle and will certainly take many adventures with those she loves. Congratulations, Karen! Enjoy the spotlight. You have earned it! Thank you for all that you do, and all that you have done for the OCSD.

This month, **Fitzhugh Park** would like to highlight **Brooke Lamphier!**



Brooke was born and raised in Oswego and graduated from SUNY Oswego with her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, along with a concentration in English. She received her Master's degree in Literacy Education at SUNY Cortland. She has taught at FPS for five years as a first-grade teacher.

What she likes most about being an educator is having the opportunity to make a difference on a daily basis. She loves to be a positive role model in her students' lives and looks forward to the connections that are built each year. Creating and prioritizing a safe space for students to learn each day is important to her, as they are continuously kept at the heart of teaching. In her free time, she enjoys scrapbooking, baking, shopping, and the outdoors!

This year, she is looking forward to welcoming her first son into the world while continuing to share the responsibility of shaping little minds within the walls of her

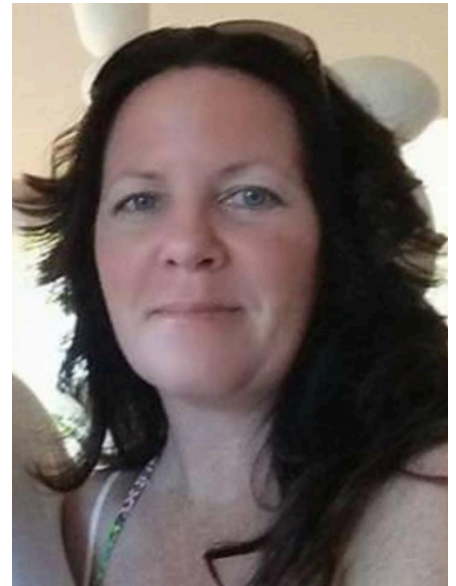
classroom. She believes this amazing new chapter will allow her to grow in various ways as a teacher. She shares that as a teacher, there is always room to grow and learn, despite how long they've been in the classroom. She will continue looking forward to helping future generations gain the necessary skills needed to achieve their goals. She can't wait to continue showing up for her students during this new journey and to help show them that their dreams are possible too.

KPS's May OCTA Spotlight shines on Michelle Peterson!

Michelle shared that she feels truly honored to be recognized and reflected on her journey in the Oswego City School District:

“I have been teaching in the OCSD since 2010 and have held a permanent position since 2013. I began my career in 5th grade with an amazing team. From there, I moved to 4th grade for a couple of years before returning to 5th grade, where I remained until last year, when I joined an incredible 6th-grade team. I am hopeful that 6th grade is where I will spend the remainder of my career at KPS.

There are many things that inspire me to continue teaching, but the relationships I build with my students stand out the most. I still keep in touch with former students who are now graduating from high school and beyond. They often reach out to share exciting news or simply when they need someone to talk to. I strive to support both my current and former students in any way I can, both inside and outside the classroom. Outside of school, I enjoy reading and writing. I am a published poet and the author of a poetry book that was illustrated by a close friend. I am currently working on additional writing projects as well. I also love traveling to warm destinations with beautiful blue waters. One of my dreams is to someday live near a beach, where I can listen to the ocean every day and take walks along the shore with my husband and our two dogs.”

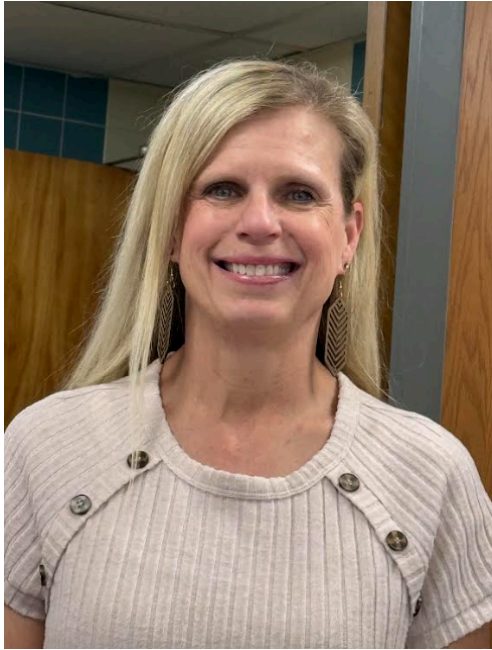


Thank you, Michelle, for your dedication to your students, your colleagues, and the KPS community. We are proud to recognize you as our May OCTA Spotlight!

This month's OCTA Spotlight shines on **Stacy Devendorf** of **Riley Elementary School**, whose dedication to students and passion for lifelong learning have made a lasting impact throughout her many years in education.

Originally from Sauquoit, Stacy came to SUNY Oswego to study Communications and soon found her calling in education. She began teaching in the Oswego City School District in September of 1999 as a

first grade teacher at Riley Elementary, where she built strong relationships with students and families over the years.



For the past two years, Stacy has embraced a new role as a Math AIS teacher, supporting students as they build confidence and strengthen their mathematical skills. She describes the opportunity as a wonderful experience and continues to bring enthusiasm and care to her work every day.

When asked what she enjoys most about being an educator, Stacy shared her belief in the power of lifelong learning. “I consider myself to be a lifelong learner,” she said. “Being an educator, I am hopeful that I have inspired students to become lifelong learners as well.” Her commitment to growth and curiosity is evident both inside and outside the classroom.

Outside of school, Stacy enjoys spending time with her husband and cheering on their children at sporting events. She also enjoys staying active through fitness classes and proudly describes herself as a “foodie.” Whether she is making, baking, photographing, or enjoying food, Stacy finds joy in creativity and connection.

As she looks ahead to the future, Stacy is excited for a new chapter: retirement. She looks forward to traveling, spending more time with her children wherever life may take them, and visiting her sister more often.

OCTA thanks Stacy Devendorf for her years of dedication, compassion, and service to the students and families of Oswego. Her positive influence and commitment to learning have helped shape countless young lives, and her impact will continue to be felt for years to come.

This month’s OCTA Spotlight recognizes **Brad Shannon of Oswego Middle School** for his decades of dedication to students, athletics, and the Oswego community.

A lifelong resident of Oswego, Brad has spent the better part of three decades serving students in the Oswego City School District. As a Physical Education teacher and coach at Oswego Middle School, he has helped generations of students build confidence, teamwork, and healthy habits both inside and outside the classroom.

When reflecting on what he enjoys most about being an educator, Brad points to the relationships he forms with students each day. “I enjoy the everyday conversations with students,” he shared. Those



daily interactions and connections have been at the heart of his long and rewarding career.

Outside of school, Brad values spending quality time with his family. He enjoys working in the yard alongside his wife, finding satisfaction in both the conversations and accomplishments they share together. He is also an avid golfer and enjoys attending UFC events with his son. Another meaningful part of his life has been helping his stepdaughter coach softball at University of Rochester, an experience he describes as “awesome.”

Looking toward the future, Brad is excited for the opportunity to travel more in retirement. Ireland, Alaska, and destinations throughout the American West are all high on his list of places to explore.

OCTA thanks Brad Shannon for his many years of commitment, mentorship, and service to the students of Oswego. His steady presence, positive relationships, and dedication to education and athletics have left a lasting impact on the Oswego community.

Sandy Kunzwiler has been a teaching assistant in the Oswego City School District for 22 years, spending the majority of her career at **Minetto** Elementary School. Sandy’s love of children inspired her to join the district in 2004.



During her tenure at Minetto School, Sandy has been a dedicated and valued member of many classroom teams, primarily in the kindergarten and first grade integrated co-teaching classrooms. She has built strong, positive relationships with all students, who know they can count on her for help with a classroom activity, tying their shoes, or if they are simply in need of a hug. Sandy’s warm smile, patience, and caring nature have made a lasting impact on countless children and families throughout the years. She has always gone above and beyond to create a welcoming and supportive environment where students feel safe, encouraged, and loved.

Beyond the classroom, Sandy actively participated in various district committees and spent many years supporting summer school programs. Her willingness to step in wherever needed and her commitment to helping both students and staff succeed made her an invaluable part of the Minetto community. Colleagues appreciated not only her hard work and dedication, but also her kindness, positivity, and sense of humor that brightened each school day.

As she enters retirement, Sandy is eager to enjoy more quality time with her loving family. While her daily presence in the hallways and classrooms of Minetto Elementary will be greatly missed, her impact on the school community will not be forgotten. Her colleagues, students, and the entire Minetto Elementary School community wish Sandy all the happiness and relaxation she so greatly deserves in this next chapter of life! Congratulations Sandy on this month's OCTA Spotlight and we wish you the best on your retirement adventures.

Love, Your Minetto Family

OCTA Volleyball INFO! Submitted by Julie Tubolino (jtubolin@oswego.org)



WHEN? Thursday June 18th, 3pm- ?
WHERE: Cheapseats

Friday May 29th - Team Captains for each building
 ~ e-mail Julie Tubolino! Start building your roster!

Friday, June 5th - Send in Team Names and Colors!
 Please send along team Rosters too if you have them.

Friday, June 12th: Team Captains Meeting. TEAM ROSTER OFFICIAL DEADLINE!

COST: Each team member will make a \$5 donation to play. Captains will decide where the donation will go if their team wins. **Team entry fee includes a free pizza. We also ask that teams donate a basket to raffle off during the tournament.**

RULES: HAVE FUN!!!

FORMAT:

ONLY 9 TEAMS – 2 from OHS and OMS, 1 from all other buildings!

Each team plays ONE GAME. Rally scoring to 25. Winner must win by 2!

Winners advance to Winner's Bracket – Losers advance to Losers Bracket.

Winners of the Losers play the Winners and head to the finals.

Biggest Losers are the losers of the losers bracket. The Final Championship Match is the best of 3 games.

There will be an additional RAFFLES, BASKETS and **BEST T-SHIRT Contest and BEST CAMPSITE Contest!!!**

PRIZES:

\$100 CASH to the winning team, a trophy & bragging rights!

\$25 CASH to the team with the best t-shirt design
\$25 CASH to the team with the best "campsite"

\$10 CASH to the Biggest Losers

NOTE: Spouses may come to observe or to purchase raffle tickets, but cannot play if they are not employed by the OCS. Please - **NO CHILDREN** between the ages of 8 and 21



WE WON!



TIER 6 CHANGES: A HUGE WIN FOR US!

★ **AGE REQUIREMENT FOR TRS** ★

DECREASED FROM

63 → 58

A BIGGER STEP. A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

CONTRIBUTION RATE PERCENTAGES FOR MANY OTHER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES LIKE ERS

SALARY	WAS:	WILL BE:
Up to \$45,000	3%	3%
\$45,001–\$55,000	3.5%	3%
\$55,001–\$75,000	4.5%	3%
\$75,001–\$100,000	5.75%	4%
\$100,001–\$125,000	6%	5.25%
\$125,001 plus	6%	5.75%



FIX TIER 6 FAIRNESS FOR ALL

THIS IS A MASSIVE WIN— BUT WE AREN'T DONE!

We will keep fighting to FIX TIER 6 and win the retirement security and respect we all deserve.

OUR FIGHT. OUR FUTURE. OUR UNION.

ONE VOICE. ONE UNION. ONE VICTORY!



WHEN WE FIGHT TOGETHER, WE WIN.

Dental Information

*Submitted by your OCTA Dental Administrator,
Lindsay Voigt*

Dear OCTA Members,

As we wrap up another school year, the OCTA Dental Plan Board would like to remind members that the current rate schedule will remain unchanged for the upcoming year. The rates are as follows:

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

For Members Retiring:

If you are retiring this year or planning to retire in the future and have questions regarding your dental coverage, please reach out to ensure a smooth transition into retirement. Please remember that participation in the retiree dental plan requires enrollment in the active plan prior to retirement.

If you have any questions regarding your dental coverage or any OCTA Dental Plan matter, please feel free to contact me at octadentalplan@gmail.com.

Wishing everyone a relaxing and enjoyable summer!

Lindsay Voigt
OCTA Dental Administrator





Eligible Expense Quick Reference

This list is intended to be used as a quick reference of potentially eligible medical expenses, and does not guarantee that an expense is eligible. It is not intended to be an all-encompassing list and may be updated from time to time. Eligible expenses are governed by Section 213(d) of the Internal Revenue Code. In addition to the list below, there are over 150 additional items or expense types that are considered potentially eligible and may require a prescription or a letter of medical necessity.

Once your account is open, you will have access to a detailed eligible expense look up table. Simply log in at [BenefitResource.com](https://www.benefitresource.com) and select **Eligible Health Care Expense Table** under the Health Savings Plan tab.

REMEMBER TO SAVE ALL RECEIPTS

You are responsible for verifying funds were used for eligible expenses if ever audited by the IRS.

A-G

- Acupuncture
- Alcoholism treatment
- Ambulance
- Arthritis gloves
- Artificial teeth
- Asthma devices and medicines
- Bandages
- Birth control products (e.g. prophylactics)
- Body scans
- Braille books and magazines
- Breast pumps
- Breast reconstruction surgery following mastectomy
- Carpal tunnel wrist supports
- Chiropractors
- Circumcision
- Co-insurance amounts
- Co-payments
- Counseling, when used to treat diagnosed medical condition
- CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) devices
- Crutches
- Dental sealants
- Dental services and procedures
- Diabetic supplies & insulin
- Diagnostic items/services
- Dizziness pills
- Drug addiction treatment
- Drug overdose, treatment of
- Durable medical equipment
- Eye examinations
- Eyeglasses
- Flu shots
- Fluoridation services
- Guide dog

H-Q

- Hospital services
- Immunizations
- Laboratory fees
- Lactation consultant
- Laser eye surgery, Lasik
- Lodging at hospital or similar institution
- Mastectomy-related special bras
- Medical alert bracelet or necklace
- Medical monitoring and testing

- devices (e.g. blood-pressure monitoring devices, blood-sugar test kits/strips)
- Medical practitioner's fee for online or telephone consultation
- Medical records charges
- Menstrual Care Products
- Midwife
- Norplant insertion or removal
- Obstetrical expenses
- Occlusal guards to prevent teeth grinding
- Operations / Surgeries
- Optometrist
- Organ donors
- Orthodontia
- Orthopedic shoe inserts
- Osteopath fees
- Ovulation monitor
- Oxygen
- Personal Protective Equipment (masks, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes)
- Physical exams
- Physical therapy
- Pregnancy test kits
- Prescription drugs and medicines
- Preventive care screenings
- Prosthesis and artificial limbs
- Psychiatric care

R-Z

- Radial keratotomy
- Reading glasses
- Rehydration solution
- Screening tests (including cancer screening tests)
- Sleep-deprivation treatment
- Speech therapy
- Stop-smoking programs
- Telephone equipment or television for hearing-impaired persons
- Transplants
- Transportation expenses for person to receive medical care, may include car mileage or alternative transportation costs
- Vaccines and immunizations
- Vision correction procedures
- Walkers/Wheelchair
- X-ray fees

OTC MEDICAL SUPPLIES

- Adult incontinence products (e.g. Depends)
- Contact lens solution
- Denture adhesives
- First aid creams
- First aid supplies (e.g. band-aids)
- Foot insoles
- Gauze Pads
- Hearing aids/hearing aid batteries
- Heat wraps (e.g. ThermaCare)
- Heating pads, hot water bottles
- Liquid adhesive for small cuts
- Medicine dropper/spoon
- Pre-natal vitamins
- Rubbing alcohol
- Sunscreen (Broad Spectrum SPF 15+)
- Supports/braces (e.g. ankle, knee, wrist, therapeutic glove)
- Thermometers

OTC DRUGS & MEDICINES

- Acne medications
- Allergy and sinus medications (e.g. Benadryl, Claritin, Sudafed)
- Anti-fungal medications (e.g. Lotramin AF)
- Anti-itch medications (e.g. Caladryl)
- Cold sore medications
- Cough, cold & flu remedies
- Decongestants
- Diaper rash ointments
- Ear supplies (e.g. wax removal)
- Gastrointestinal aids (e.g. antacids, anti-diarrhea medicines, non-fiber laxatives, nausea medications)
- Motion sickness pills
- Nasal sprays for congestion (e.g. Afrin)
- Pain relievers (e.g. aspirin, Excedrin, Tylenol, Advil, Motrin)
- Sleeping aids
- Smoking cessation medications (e.g. nicotine gum or patches)
- Suppositories
- Toothache relievers (e.g. Orajel)
- Topical ointments for gingivitis
- Wart remover medications
- Yeast infection creams (e.g. Monistat)



New York State
Deferred Compensation Plan

A Plan for Your Future

The **New York State Deferred Compensation Plan (457b)** will be hosting educational webinars in June for all employees who wish to attend and who are thinking of enrolling into the Plan and/or learn more about the Plan. The NYSDCP is a supplemental retirement plan

which is also known as a 457(b) plan and their mission is to help State and local-public employees achieve their retirement savings goals and help bridge any potential financial gap in retirement. *Please keep in mind, that you can have both a 403b & a 457b.* Registration for all webinars are below.

NYSDCP Enrollment Webinars

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

Join us for a conversation about the benefits of joining the NYS Deferred Comp Plan. We will go over the basics of the Plan and how to enroll. We also will discuss the differences between a 457b and a 403b. All are welcome to participate. Registration required.

12pm session:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/8df2b547-9b89-47da-ae5-f40f3b507122@22140e4c-d390-45c2-b297-a26c516dc461>

4pm session:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/751f4d0e-c37e-47be-b33c-65d1742a5184@22140e4c-d390-45c2-b297-a26c516dc461>

NYSDCP Pre-Retirement Webinar

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 4pm

Join us for a conversation about important considerations as you get closer to retirement. We will discuss longevity, income sources, asset consolidation, and required minimum distributions. All are welcome to participate. Registration required.

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/be78ceb4-e240-47b3-82ff-0559e237fd95@22140e4c-d390-45c2-b297-a26c516dc461>

Ways of contacting NYS Deferred Compensation Plan:

- **AE Connect (investment specific questions):** 1-844-867-8197 (9am – 4:30pm)
- **Helpline (general questions):** 1-800-422-8463 (8am – 11pm)
- **Prefer us to call you?** Schedule an appointment here:
<https://outlook.office365.com/book/TeamAccountExecutiveConnect@nationwide.com/>
- **Website:** www.nysdcp.com

OCTA Blast May 2026

Highlights from our May 2026 Meeting



Remember: As a public employee, you do not enjoy freedom of speech relative to issues connected to your employment. ([Video](#)) Protections are limited by your official job duties, the requirements of the curriculum, and the need to maintain an effective, non-disruptive educational environment. Off-campus speech (including social media posts) loses First Amendment protection if the

school administration can demonstrate that the speech negatively impacts school functions, disrupts the educational process, or impairs your effectiveness as an educator. Obscenity, defamation, and incitement are never protected. Please do not speak about coworkers, employers and students (especially in public).

- Confidentiality is of utmost importance, applying to all staff and student information, including those located in other buildings.
- **Never** share personal information about a student or staff member via social media (Facebook/Insta/Snap...), email, or casual hallway conversations. Remember, the district has updated their [policy regarding social media!](#)
- **As trusted OCTA members, we must maintain a sensitive, confidential, and professional approach to all situations throughout our district.**

Oswego County Teachers Workplace Violence: June 9th at the Leighton Cafeteria 5:00 pm. [Sign up required.](#) This is a NYSUT event - please consider attending. Teachers and Teacher Assistants... this is incredibly informative and important. It's also critically important that people continue to report any safety matters related to WPV to your building safety steward.

APPR: We can negotiate a new STEPS Plan, but will need a building rep to sit on a committee (used to be portfolios, etc) **If you are interested in sitting on this committee reach out to Jessica Burridge.**

Long Term Disability Please check your pay stub to see if you have long-term disability coverage. The code on your pay stub is listed as D/I. The cost is less than \$2 per paycheck, and the district pays 75% of the premium.

If you do not have this coverage and want to add it, please contact Amanda Hamilton.

The sick bank serves as our short-term disability coverage and can provide up to 100 days of coverage if you are enrolled. After those 100 days, long-term disability coverage would be needed, so it is important to check for the D/I code on your pay stub.

Adopt A Highway: Adopt A Highway will take place on June 16th. It will begin at 4:15. We will meet in the OHS Liberty Street Parking Lot (park near Utica Street). Let Michelle McManus know if you are able to help.

Volleyball: Save the date! Our volleyball event will be held on THURSDAY June 18, 2026. Stay tuned for more details.

NYSUT News: Want to keep up to date on all NYSUT related conversations? Join the MAC (Member Action Center) [Take action!!](#)

NYSUT RUNS [Join the Exciting 5K Runs in New York!](#)

The link provides PR for running events that are happening in our communities. If anyone is interested in creating a 5K opportunity for our community or county, let Carrie know.

Blessings in a Backpack Chicken BBQ Fundraiser

Support a great cause and enjoy a great meal! Blessings in a Backpack is hosting a Chicken BBQ at **Lighthouse Lanes** on **Saturday, May 30th**.

- **Time:** 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM (Presales must be picked up by 2:00 PM)
- **Tickets:** \$15.00

To purchase tickets, please contact **Michelle McManus** or **Melissa Russell**. Thank you for supporting our local youth!

Safety: Share safety concerns with your union Safety Representatives:

OHS- Gina Iorio
 MIN- Katie Tesoriero
 OMS- Dan Rogers/ Clare Donovan/ Jeff Brown
 CER- Tara Lagoe
 KPS- Carolyn Slobodian
 FLS- Kate Bowman
 FPS- Cari Joyce

EMAIL THEM THE FOLLOWING:

- Location of incident
- Describe concern (threat or building issue)
- Was anyone injured?
- Describe injury
- Did the employee fill out the Employee's [Accident Report for Workers' Compensation](#) and return it to the nurse?
- Was there a referral or any follow-up?



Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

Customer Care Center

(315) 641-5848 • (800) 887-9146
APcustomercare@assuredpartners.com

Customer Care Center

Here To Help You With:

- Benefit Questions
- Claim Issues
- ID Cards and more...

Monday–Friday 7:30am–5:00pm (EST)

Insurance: If you are having difficulties with MVP be sure to reach out to GALLAGHER (*WAS Assured Partners/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 GIA Telemed, ask for GENERIC RX, and use Express Scripts MAIL ORDER when possible to help reduce plan costs and to lower our premiums. OUR USAGE IS UP BY A LOT THIS YEAR and our premiums next year reflect our costs from this year.

FIX TIER 6 - [How bad is it?](#) [Get involved!!](#) [Watch a Video](#)

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

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.

Member Benefits Teacher Discounts: Click on this [link](#) to view teacher discounts.

OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE: [2025-2026 OCTA Resource Guide](#)

New members (or anyone who hasn't completed it yet or needs to update their email or name) please take a moment to fill out the [OCTA Contact Form](#).

Good news! Your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Group Legal Service Plan has been renewed. Please refer to this reference sheet and the attached Certificate of Coverage for details.

Contact for ALL Legal Questions & Referrals - Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C.

- **Main Phone Number:** 631-231-1450
- **Toll-Free (NY) Phone Number:** 800-832-5182
- **Outside NY & After-Hours Phone Number:** 800-292-8063

Popular Benefits

- Free letter writing, phone consultations & document review
- Legal Security Package for your estate planning documents (see below)
- Referral attorney rate: \$285/hour or 25% off their standard hourly rate (whichever is lower)
- Two (2) one-hour consultations per renewal period (restrictions apply; see Certificate of Coverage)

How to Use Your Plan

- Contact the National Legal Office.
- Provide your **NYSUT ID Number** & a brief explanation of your legal matter.
- Get connected with a staff attorney or referral attorney depending on your matter.

Legal Security Package (LSP)

- Three (3) packages per two-year renewal period
- Contains forms to prepare your Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Power of Attorney
- Covers spouse, domestic partner, parents, grandparents & in-laws
- Download at mb-nysut.org/LegalLSP or call the National Legal Office or NYSUT Member Benefits

Elder Law Services

- 20% discount on Elder Law Attorney fees
- Covers spouse, domestic partner, parents, grandparents & in-laws
- Refer to Certificate of Coverage for details

Know Your Paycheck Deductions-

[Document from Meghan Wilson](#)

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

MED/DENT is your flex spending account
DFBOCTIN is your OCTA Dental Insurance
VISFIND = Vision individual

STATE is state tax

D/I OCTA is disability insurance

HI10F15% is 10 month family/single health

INSREIMB = Insurance Reimbursement (in Dec) for those off step

TRS= money you pay into NYS Teachers Retirement

OCTA28+ is your union dues

OPL is city library contribution

NYSUT = member benefits (Life ins, legal, etc.)

THANK YOU to our OCTA Building Leadership 25-26

CER

Ted Beers
Holly Babcock

FPS

Julie Tubolino
Cari Joyce

KPS

Tricia Caroccio
Allie Yule

FLS

Meghan Harrison
Amy Armet

MIN

Keri Hunter
Stacie Waterhouse-
Roberts

OHS

Gina Iorio
Heather Sugar
Robert Dumas

OMS





Jeff Brown
Clare Donovan

Substitutes

Terri Stacy

2026-2028


OCTA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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	1st Vice President:	Kim LeRoy
	2nd Vice President:	Jessica Burrige
	3rd Vice President:	Dan Rose
	4th Vice President:	Jennifer Cahill
	Secretary:	Michelle McManus
	Treasurer:	Mike Patane

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Vice President:
Robert Dumas

 **OMS**

President:
Clare Donovan

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Elisa Davis


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Cari Joyce


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Meghan Harrison


Vice President:
Kate Bowman

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Allie Yule

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Co-Presidents:
Keri Hunter and
Stacie Roberts-Waterhouse

 **CER**

President:
T. Beers

Co-Vice Presidents:
Ann Jadus and
Diana Proano

 **SUBSTITUTES**

President:
Terri Stacy

Vice President:
Molly Clark

Member Benefits covers all your summer needs!



**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You

May/June 2026

No matter what your upcoming plans include, NYSUT Member Benefits can help turn this summer into one that you'll always remember.

If you're seeking excitement, look no further than the Grand Circle Travel & Overseas Adventure Travel program. NYSUT members enjoy reduced pricing (at least a \$150 savings per trip along with many other discount opportunities) on a variety of international and domestic tours, including new "Immersion" adventures (8-12 days in length) designed for travelers seeking a more active style of adventure. "Immersion" tours combine iconic destinations, authentic cultural experiences, and dynamic outdoor activities.

Transform your indoor or outdoor

living space with a variety of options from **Purchasing Power**. Eligible NYSUT members can browse from thousands of items and pay over 12 months through payroll deduction or Automated Clearing House (ACH) withdrawals. Save 20% on your first order and at least 10% on all subsequent purchases. While not a discount program, Purchasing Power offers the benefits of no credit check, no hidden fees, and fixed payments.

Thinking about upgrading your home with new appliances, countertops, or kitchen cabinets? The **Buyer's Edge, Inc.** buying service program can be

used to purchase these items and many others such as new or used vehicles, televisions, furniture, mattresses, desktop and laptop computers, home security systems, and more (all backed by a low price guarantee). With Buyer's Edge, you have the option of purchasing online, by phone, or in-person (in certain benefit categories and geographic regions).

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT THESE
BENEFITS AND
MANY OTHERS**

SCAN ME



Scan the QR code, visit mb-nysut.org/summerplanning, or call 800-626-8101.

Union Victories

May 28, 2026

Fix Tier 6 efforts yield major reform: Members can now retire at 58

Author: Molly Belmont



Source: NYSUT

This year's state budget includes welcome news for all Fix Tier 6 advocates: Thanks to member solidarity, we secured meaningful pension reforms for Tier 6 members in multiple retirement systems.

According to budget details released Friday, Tier 6 updates vary by member group. For Tier 6 members in NYSTRS and NYCTRS, a group that includes most teachers and teaching assistants, the retirement age will be reduced by five years, from 63 to 58, for members with 30 years of service, without penalties. [Read the REST: CLICK HERE](#)

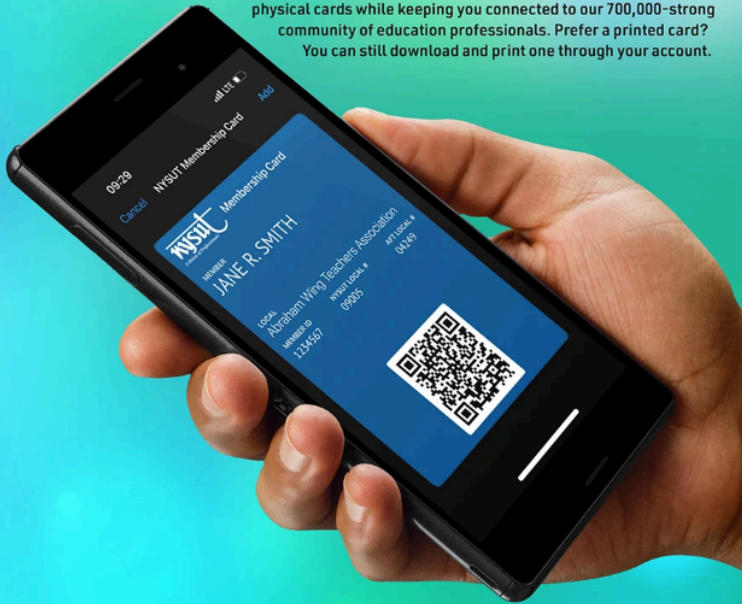
[Read the Latest Edition of NYSUT UNITED:](#)



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

Get Your NYSUT Digital Membership Card

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.



Visit My NYSUT today to access your digital card: nysut.cc/digitalcard or scan the QR code now.



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](#) or follow the QR code in the image to the left and secure your 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 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.

