

# OCTA Advocate

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



## November 2021

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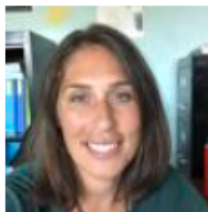
**Meet your 2021-2022 OCTA Officers!**



Carrie Patane  
OCTA President



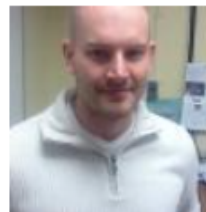
Kim LeRoy  
VP Grievance



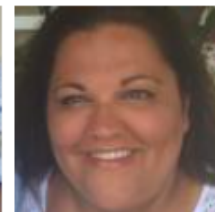
Jess Burridge  
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill  
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane  
Treasurer



Michelle McManus  
Secretary



Dan Rose  
VP Newsletter



## Message from your OCTA President, Carrie Patane A Season of Thanks

Hello All,

In this season of thanks, we have much to celebrate: the eager students who come to school each day, the faculty and staff who support us along the way, and above all our health, safety, and well-being as we navigate these challenging times.

Now, more than ever, we celebrate our profession, the fact that we are educators, and the fact that we are granted the opportunity to make a real, palpable and lasting difference in so many lives. When we find ourselves struggling to make it through the day, when we find our tempers and patience running short, when we find ourselves losing sight of what is most important, remember that we have each other on which to lean; we will never have to 'go it alone.'

We are thankful for those around us.  
We are thankful for each other.

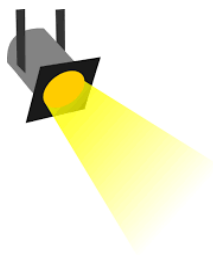
As we enter another holiday season, we take time to refresh, recharge, and reflect, and to pay homage to those around us, those who provide us the energy and stamina to continue our pursuits in this most rewarding work.

We are only as strong as we are united.  
We as a building, we as a district, we as a union.

*In Solidarity,  
Carrie*

**I am especially thankful that we have a fair contract!** - which has been finalized and signed!  
Click here for access to a digital copy of our updated collective bargaining agreement:

[21-24 OCTA Contract final draft](#)

**OMS GUIDANCE COUNSELOR IN THIS MONTH'S OCTA SPOTLIGHT!**A graphic of a spotlight with a yellow beam of light shining out from it.

Kathy Pearson is a guidance counselor at Oswego Middle School in her 34th year in education. Kathy began her career as an Elementary Guidance Counselor in Bennington, Vermont. Subsequently, she worked for the Liverpool School District, Oswego County BOCES and serviced various schools in Mexico and Pulaski. We are fortunate to have had her on our Oswego Middle School staff since 1994. Kathy finds great



satisfaction in working with students and helping them find their paths to success. Through her supportive listening skills and empathetic personality, Kathy remains a patient, positive, and influential force for all students. She has noticed that over the years many things have remained the same for middle school students: they want to be accepted, have friends, and be successful. She notes that since COVID, students seem to need more assistance, both academically and emotionally. Kathy values working with the students and staff at OMS and comments that, “there is a feeling of family at OMS, and our administration is top notch.” Outside the guidance office, Kathy enjoys spending time with her family and her Chocolate Labrador dog, Shelly. She also loves reading, walking, and traveling. Enjoy the OCTA spotlight, Kathy! You earned it!



**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](mailto:drose@oswego.org). All nominees and nominators will receive a SPECIAL GIFT from OCTA!**

**Send your nomination today!**

## Get to know your building leadership!

Below is the current list of OCTA Building Officers and Representatives for this school year. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with your building president, vice president and representatives. Thank you to all members who have stepped up to take on a leadership role.

**Building Officers and Representatives 2020-2022**

<b>OHS</b>	<b>315-341-2202</b>	<b>FLS</b>	<b>315-341-2700</b>
Gina Iorio Pres	giorio	Jamie Turtura Pres	jturtura
Heather Sugar Pres	hsugar	Amy Armet VP	aarmet
Robert Dumas VP	rdumas	Carolyn Dehm	cdehm2
Gloria Canale-Giberson	gcanale	Jennifer Cahill	jcahill
Lindsay Brown	lbrown23	Jim Hartmann	jhartman
Tami Palmitesso	tpalmit2	Michelle McManus	mmcmanu2
Kathy Audlin	kaudlin		
Jenn Smith	jsmith3	<b>FPS</b>	<b>315-341-2400</b>
Kaylee Morse	kmorse	Erin Wilder Pres	ewilder
Sarah Kimak	skimak	Jamie Brancato VP	jbrancat2
Trish Shene	pshene	Laurie Kelly	lkelly
Amy Orr	aorr	Cari Joyce	cjoyce2
Sarah Williams	swillia2	Lisa Coleman	lcolema2
		Julie Tubolino	jtubolin
<b>OMS</b>	<b>315-341-2300</b>		
Jeff Brown Pres	jbrown	<b>MIN</b>	<b>315-341-2600</b>
Alison Anderson Pres	aanders4	Carol Janice Pres	cjanice
MaryAlice Brennan Pres	mbrennan	Amy Sullivan Pres	asulliva
Sally Kingsbury	skingsbu	Sandy Kunzwiler	skunzwil
Susan Roik	sroik	Don Fronk	dfronk
Chad Platten	cplatten	Rayna Mills	rmills2
Elise Davis	edavis	Jenn Szkotak	jszkotak
Peg Holt	mholt	Crystal Mason	cmason
Michelle Cooper	mcooper	Keri Hunter	khunter
Maureen Wallace	mwallace		
<b>KPS</b>	<b>315-341-2500</b>	<b>CER</b>	<b>315-341-2800</b>
Mary Lynne Maxwell Pres	mmaxwell	Terri Stacy Pres	tcullens
Hope Mazuroski	hmazuros	Teddy Beers VP	tbeers
Carolyn Slobodian	cslobodi	Molly Clark	mclark2
Gretchen Coakley	gcoakley	Holly Babcock	hbabcock
Shannon Kane	skane	Ann Jadus	ajadus
Kristyn Frost	kfrost		
<b>Sub President- Ed Stacy</b>	<b>Sub Co Vice Presidents - Meg McLaughlin</b>		



November 19, 2021

## SRP Recognition Day: Celebrating the Superheroes of Our Schools!

Source: NYSUT Communications



*Caption: Collage via @Nyack\_Schools on Twitter.*

Local unions, districts, families and communities all over the state pulled out the stops [to honor School-Related Professionals this past week](#). SRPs are the true super heroes of our schools!

You can [submit the name of an SRP](#) in your community for special recognition and send us your superhero shout outs; a sample of recent shout outs are included below.

### RELATED STORIES

- [School Security](#). NYSUT Board Member Karen Lee Arthmann offers an up close and personal account of her job as a Youth Assistant in Rush-Henrietta schools. "Our most important function is to listen," she says.
- [Social-Emotional Needs](#). Even super heroes need to take time to help themselves. The recent SRP Leadership Conference included a session encouraging School-Related Professionals to tend to their own social-emotional needs in trying times.
- [SRP Leadership Conference](#). 140 statewide school staff members – including 52 first timers – masked up and met in Saratoga Springs on a rainy fall Halloween weekend for professional learning workshops, union networking, and the community that comes from sharing meals.
- [Moral Fusion Leadership Award](#). Also this week, NYSUT's SRPs were recognized by the state Labor-Religion Coalition with the Moral Fusion Leadership Award for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and meeting critical needs in our communities. NYSUT SRP At-Large Director Angie Rivera accepted the award.

**Your 2021 NYSTRS *Benefit Profile* is now available in your online MyNYSTRS account!**



To view this annual statement, log in to your secure [MyNYSTRS](#) account and select My Retirement > Benefit Profile.

We suggest you also read the "[Planning for Retirement](#)" insert, which details the retirement process and benefit payment options. While the insert, which is also available in your MyNYSTRS account on the *Benefit Profile* page, may be especially useful to those nearing retirement, younger members will want to read the information on earning service credit.

The *Benefit Profile* includes your NYSTRS service, salary information and beneficiary(ies) as of June 30, 2021. Depending on your membership status and eligibility, the document may also include projections of a service retirement benefit; disability and death benefit projections; a summary of contributions; and loan information (if applicable).

Please review your *Profile* to ensure your employer(s) correctly reported your service and salary data – both of which are major components of the formula used to calculate your future retirement benefit. If you find errors, contact your employer(s) and request corrections be submitted to NYSTRS. Review your beneficiary information as well so you can make any necessary changes.

*Have not set up a MyNYSTRS account yet? [Click here for account registration information!](#)*

*Don't remember your NYSTRS Employee ID number? Forgot your username and/or password? Don't worry! Follow the instructions found through the link above.*

## Check out all your union membership has to offer!

### Legal Service Plan

**Plan benefits include:**

- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

### Financial Counseling Program

**Plan benefits include:**

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone and virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more

## NYSUT Member Benefits

**Every Dollar Counts!**

These are just two of the dozens of endorsed programs & services available to union members and their families.

Whether it's insurance products, financial or legal services, or discounts, shopping or travel, NYSUT Member Benefits offers numerous programs that can help you save time and money while protecting those you care about most. Many of these programs can be purchased through payroll or pension deduction for greater convenience and savings opportunities.

Member Benefits also provides the advocacy role that is so important should an issue or concern arise. We encourage you to take the time to explore the Member Benefits website to find out how we can help you make every dollar count!



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,  
visiting [memberbenefits.nysut.org](https://memberbenefits.nysut.org)  
or calling 800-626-8101.





## Support all students and educators (This month we give thanks for ALL educators, including school psychologists)

By Liza Frenette [liza.frenette@nysut.org](mailto:liza.frenette@nysut.org)

Wappingers school psychologist Beth Rizzi created online resources to reach students. In the North Country village of Malone, school psychologist Chris Van Houten is consulting more with teachers, making more classroom visits and making a point to meet with all students. In Scarsdale and suburban Gates-Chili, school psychologists have embraced telehealth practices to make sure students have access to services. Across the state, NYSUT school psychologists, like their teaching counterparts, had to create new pathways to reach students when school buildings closed and are now gleaning ways to help students adjust to being back in school.

Many students have experienced the upheaval of a world where some parents lost jobs, family members died or are experiencing long-term illness from COVID-19, and social isolation became necessary to avoid exposure to the virus. More students now struggle with anxiety.

As part of NYSUT's Future Forward initiative, the union says schools must prioritize, fund and staff school psychologists, social workers, counselors, nurses and school-related professionals so that social-emotional supports are available to all students.

NYSUT recommends three bills currently before the state Legislature to make this happen: One to require schools to employ at least one full-time social worker and a licensed school psychologist, another to require at least one counselor, and one to ensure all districts and BOCES employ at least one registered professional nurse in each school building. This year's hard-won increase in state Foundation Aid and federal American Recovery Plan funding presents an opportunity to accomplish these long-overdue goals, said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta in recent testimony before the state Senate Education and Budget committees

School psychologists agree. When school buildings closed, Rizzi, a member of the Wappingers Congress of Teachers and president of the New York Association of School Psychologists, created a Bitmoji, or virtual, office stockpiled with links and resources on topics ranging from meditation to mindfulness to support students. "We also created a check-in form that kids could access online. If they were experiencing a crisis and needed to be seen, they could complete the form and one of us would reach out," she said. Panic attacks, family discord, fear about academics, family illness or suicidal ideation are just some of the crises presented.



[READ THE REST IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE OF NYSUT UNITED](#)



## NYSUT Certification Webinars



### [NYSUT Certification Webinars](#) (Click for list)

We know that certification in New York State can be complicated and stressful. That's why NYSUT has an office that's entirely devoted to helping our members navigate the certification process. While the State Education Department manages all certifications, our certification experts are here to give you honest answers and help you through the process. NYSUT is pleased to offer a new range of **free webinars to help our members with their certification questions**. These webinars are designed to help NYSUT members with specific challenges they encounter understanding and managing their certifications. **Space in each webinar is limited. Please sign up only if you plan to attend.** Webinars are free for NYSUT members. Upcoming Certification Webinars

- Initial to Professional Certification Guidance
- Teaching Assistant Certification Guidance
- Options Related to Expiring Certificates/Changing Assignments



Thank you to all those that generously donated to our 2021 Vote COPE Campaign. A HUGE shout-out to all of the building Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Representatives that made this year's campaign so successful! Our OCTA couldn't do it without all of you.

**Submitted by OCTA VP Jenn Cahill**

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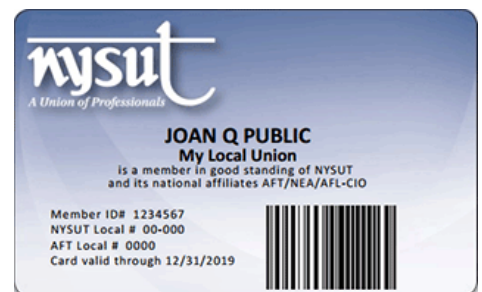
**Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!?**

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

