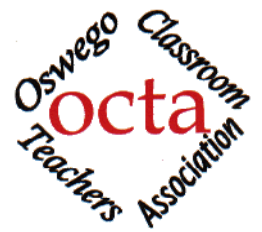


OCTA Advocate

A newsletter for members, retired members, friends and supporters of the Oswego

Classroom Teachers Association

February 2019



February 22, 2019

Inspire Staff United goes on strike seeking better learning environment at Inspire Kids

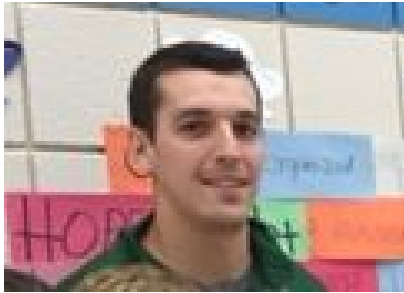
Source: NYSUT Media Relations



GOSHEN, N.Y. Feb. 22, 2019 – Members of Inspire Staff United went on a one-day strike Friday to protest management’s disregard for fair contract provisions that would allow the network of schools to better serve preschool children with intensive education needs.

Inspire Staff United organized in 2015 to seek better working conditions at Inspire’s schools, which serve children with developmental disabilities from across Orange County. Negotiations with Inspire’s administration on a first contract began in January 2016, but more than three years later, negotiations still have not led to a fair agreement that would provide for a better learning environment for these children. Inspire Staff United has articulated numerous concerns, including:

- short staffing due to high staff turnover, which contributes to high caseloads that take away from staff’s ability to serve every child;
- insufficient pay, which has contributed to difficulties in filling vacant positions and exacerbates issues stemming from high caseloads - [READ THE REST CLICK HERE!](#)



P.E. teacher Fred Donabella is in the February OCTA Spotlight!

Fred is a new P.E. Teacher at Leighton this year. Fred had some big shoes to fill and has done a fantastic job. He has gone above and beyond to make connections with all students, especially our most challenging. Fred often gives up his planning time to assist when students are having a hard time.

The students look forward to seeing Mr. D upon arrival and at his cafeteria dismissal spot. Welcome to Leighton Freddy!

Congratulations, Fred! Enjoy the OCTA spotlight --- you earned it!!

Do you know an OCTA member who works hard at what they do? 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 March's OCTA spotlight!!! This new 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.

[Learn all about your 2018 NYSTRS Benefit Profile!](#)

Did you know that the New York State Teachers Retirement System (of which OCTA members are a part) has a series of informational videos covering a wide range of retirement and benefit topics including: prior service, your benefit profile, loans, prep seminars and MUCH, MUCH MORE??

Follow [this link](#) to learn even more about the benefits of the NYSTRS!!

Who Ya Gonna Call?!

Have an important question and not sure who to call? Please refer to the document below or feel free to ask your [OCTA building president, vice president or rep!!](#)

Personnel Contact Information

Personnel	Name	Extension
Benefits Clerk	Melissa Syrell	7016
CSEA	Pat Perfetti	7025
OCTA & AAP	Meghan Wilson	7026

Please dial extension 2009 to be connected with Dr. Sweeney

Personnel FAQs

Insurance questions	Melissa Syrell
Items for the board agenda	Pat Perfetti
Payroll questions	Kelly Lagoe Extension 7015
Longevity, salary adjustments, coursework credit	CSEA – Pat Perfetti OCTA – Meghan Wilson
Vacancy/sub postings for admin., teachers, TAs, athletics (OCTA)	Meghan Wilson
Vacancy/sub postings for aides, clerical, custodial, food services, school monitors, transportation, warehouse (CSEA)	Pat Perfetti

Personnel Office Reminders and Updates

Submitted by Executive Director of Secondary Education and Personnel, Dr. Heidi Sweeney

1. **Electronic forms** for time requests are to be submitted according to your bargaining unit requirements but as a gentle reminder, all employees must submit an electronic form for time requested. Medical notes should be sent/brought directly to the Personnel Office. You are welcome to provide a copy to your supervisor or timekeeper, if you would like to do so, but medical notes are protected under HIPAA and treated as confidential documents. They should be sent to Melissa Syrell's attention.
2. Please remember that the **Google Team Drive** is where you will find information about the Employee Assistance Program (Help People), which is a free and confidential service. The Personnel Folder also contains updated versions of what was previously housed in Alfresco- this format is much easier to navigate!
3. A **frequently asked question about MLP** is "My conference is coming soon and I am waiting for your approval in the MLP routing queue- can you please review that?". However, it's important to remember that I am the final approver on MLP for most conference requests and I confirm your attendance for professional development time tracking purposes.
4. An updated **Employee Incident report** will be emailed out shortly and can be found in the Team Drive- as a reminder, custodial reports should be reviewed the building principal and then sent to David Crisafulli for signatures. Reports should be submitted as soon as possible- we are fined by the Worker's Compensation Board for late submissions.
5. Attached below are two newsletters from UMR, regarding Point of Care and Controlling Health Care Costs-

Please let us know if you have any questions-

[Point of Care](#)

[Controlling Health Care Costs](#)

Updated Employee Accident Report for Workers' Compensation

Submitted by Melissa Syrell, Benefits Clerk

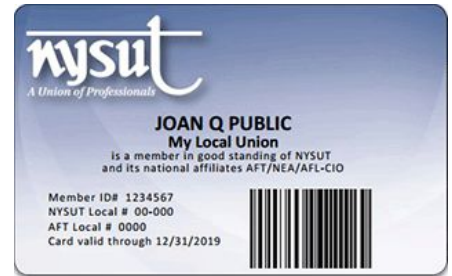
Below, please find the link to the updated Employee Accident Report for Workers' Compensation. Please use this from now on. Supervisors, principals and timekeepers please print and keep this one on hand, discarding the old form.

Thank you for your time.

[Updated Employee Accident Report for Workers Compensation](#)

What can I do with my NYSUT card?

NYSUT members and their loved ones have access to dozens of endorsed programs available through NYSUT Member Benefits, including auto, homeowners and life insurance; vision and dental plans; legal and financial services; hotel and vacation discounts; car and truck rental discounts; competitive savings rates; discounted sports and concert tickets; theme park discounts; and much more.



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



Important 2018 Tax Information!!!

Please keep your Dec. 20, 2018 pay stub and look at the OCTA 28+ for your 2018 dues total. Also, when the district sends out your W-2 forms this month, your dues withholding will also be on the form. Amounts will vary based on full time, part time, TA, date of hire, leave of absence . . . etc. Full time employees for 2018 = \$841.03

Submitted by OCTA Treasurer, Mike Patane

Retirement seminar for OCTA Members coming April 4th!!!

Submitted by Dan Rose (OCTA VP/ OCSD Retirement Delegate)

Guaranteed Benefits of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System

Even in turbulent economic times like these, you can achieve future financial strength and security by building a strong pension at NYSTRS. This presentation will provide an overview of the important benefits NYSTRS provides, with an emphasis on issues pertaining to members approaching retirement. Highlights include a review of the fundamental pension components such as service credit and final average salary, key



retirement thresholds to reach for, the tools needed to maximize these benefits, retirement benefit options and much more. Hopefully you'll leave our meeting with a handle on what's needed to plan wisely on your road to retirement, as well as what costly errors to avoid along the way.

Reserve your spot at the next New York State Teachers' Retirement System Seminar today!! The meeting will be held on Thursday, April 4 2019 (5:00 PM start).

New members will learn valuable information about the retirement system of which they are now a part, and experienced members will continue to build on their current knowledge of the system, ensuring a dignified, financially secure retirement.

Food will be provided courtesy of the OCTA! Please contact Dan Rose drose@oswego.org to reserve a spot at this very special seminar. The meeting will start promptly at 5:00 and be held in the OCTA Office @ 122 W 2nd Street (across from Cam's Pizza).

BONUS! – All OCTA members in attendance will have a chance to win a special prize!



Q: Can I borrow money from my Teachers' Retirement System contributions?

A: YES! You may borrow up to 75 percent of your personal TRS contributions — employer contributions are not eligible. Tier 3- 6 members with at least one year of service credit and \$1,334 in contributions, plus interest, can borrow a minimum of \$1,000 once per calendar year. Tier 1-2 members can borrow a minimum of \$300, must have personal contributions of at least \$400 and may borrow once between

Jan. 1 through June 30, and again between July 1 through Dec. 31.

LEARN MORE! CLICK THE LINK -

[Borrowing from your NYSTRS contributions](#)



Benefits designed exclusively for NYSUT members

NYSUT members and their loved ones have access to dozens of endorsed shopping, travel & personal programs available through NYSUT Member Benefits, including discounts on hotels & vacations; car & truck rentals; international group tours; sports & concert tickets; theme parks & attractions; and more.

Whether you are participating in one of our shopping/entertainment/travel offerings; auto, homeowners or life insurance plans; or financial or legal services, NYSUT members have the "Power of the Union" behind them ready to serve as their advocate.

The following is just a sample of the endorsed programs available to NYSUT members:

Bose -- NYSUT members receive special educator pricing on high-end, high-quality electronics such as music systems, headphones and bluetooth speakers. You must contact Bose toll-free at 877-709-2073 and mention "educator pricing" to receive this exclusive pricing.

Orlando Employee Discounts -- NYSUT members save up to 30% on unforgettable Orlando, FL excursions to Disney World, Universal Studios and many other attractions.

Grand Circle Travel -- NYSUT members can enjoy a number of unique travel deals on international river cruises and other travel opportunities with Grand Circle's small ship cruise tours, river cruises and land tours.

Member Appreciation Month is back!

One of our most popular annual events is set to return this February. The 2019 Member Appreciation Month celebration will be filled with a series of prize drawings for items donated by NYSUT Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers -- including gift cards, iPads, Echo Dots and more!

As a MAP Alert member, you are eligible to win prizes every single day throughout the month of February.

All MAP Alert members are already entered to win; if you have colleagues who would like to be eligible to win, they simply need to sign up for our MAP Alert service on the Member Benefits website. Prize winners will be listed daily on the Member Benefits website.



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101**.



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

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

While navigating the OCTA WEBSITE you can:

- Access and read the current [OCTA CONTRACT](#)
- Look up your current [Building President \(and reps\)](#)
- Access the new [OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE](#) - a document full of information that OCTA members WANT and NEED to know
- Access [BOARD OF ED MINUTES and AGENDAS](#)
- Access ALL your benefit accounts including [dental, health and retirement](#)
- View current and past [NEWSLETTERS](#)
- View recent [OCTA photos and read Thank You letters](#) written in response to OCTA donations or volunteer work



We encourage all NYSUT (and OCTA) members to sign up for our MAP (Member Alert Program) Alert email service to be among the first to learn about new endorsed programs & services, changes to existing programs, and special prize drawings. Please click on the above image to sign up!

OCTA Advocate is published by the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association, West 1st Street, Oswego, NY. **President:** Carrie Patane, **VP Grievance:** Kim LeRoy **VP Negotiations:** Gretchen Coakley **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.

