

# OCTA Advocate

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

Classroom Teachers Association

## January 2019



### TAKE A LOOK AT TEACHING: Western New York shines a light on 'what's great about the teaching profession' Author: Matt Smith

Source: NYSUT Communications



**Caption:** Denise Grandits, a 10-year classroom veteran and ELA teacher at Franklin Middle School in Kenmore, talks about her non-traditional path to the classroom during NYSUT's Take a Look at Teaching summit. Photo by Dan Cappellazzo.

Since she was a child, Denise Grandits wanted to be a teacher. But then her life happened: marriage, kids and before she knew it, she was 20 years deep into her career working for a large healthcare organization in Western New York.

"I had a boss who saw something in me and said I should pursue my master's," said Grandits, recalling what her boss actually had in mind was that she pursue a master's in business administration. "I thought it over and told my husband, 'If I'm going to do this, I'm going to get my master's in something in which I'm interested.' Ever since I was in second grade I wanted to be a teacher. So, I decided to go for it."

And at age 43, she graduated from Empire State College with a master's in teaching English Education.

Now a 10-year classroom veteran and English language arts teacher at Franklin Middle School in Kenmore, Grandits has never looked back.

"It was scary as heck to leave a career in which I knew there was always going to be a paycheck and moving on to a profession that I knew I always wanted to pursue but was uncertain what to expect and whether I could even do it," said the Kenmore Teachers Association member. "But now, when I look at my students, there's not a question in my mind whether I made the right decision. I'd do it again in a heart beat."

[\(Click HERE to read the rest of the article\)](#)

## Minetto librarian in the January OCTA Spotlight!!!



Kim LeRoy is Minetto's go-to person if we need a bit of advice. Kim keeps a level head and looks at both sides of the coin to offer the best possible solution.

Not only does our staff rely on Kim's guidance, but the students love talking and sharing their reading experiences with Mrs. LeRoy. She lets the kids come into the library at the end of the day to decompress. The kids get to work on various activities like STEM projects, puzzles, technology or just read quietly in the library loft.

The library is definitely the heartbeat of the school, but that is because we have a librarian with a big heart. Congratulations, Kim! 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 December'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](mailto:drose@oswego.org).*

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

School Year	Employer
7/1/20XX - 6/30/20XX	Albany School District
7/1/20XX - 6/30/20XX	Guiderland School District

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 MORE?! Click on the following link to view the library of videos and take a few moments to watch one!

[NYSTRS Member Information \(video library\)](#) Learn about benefits and retirement readiness.

## 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

## [NYSUT United: January/February 2019 \(PDF version\)](#)

Source: NYSUT Communications



Click on the hyperlinks to read a digital copy of [NYSUT UNITED](#) which includes the following articles (plus MANY more!):

- Pallotta: APPR is job one for new Legislature (page 5)
- Beat back the union busters (page 7)
- TEACH Grant loan relief available (page 7)
- BOCES union leaders voice concerns on staff shortages, increased violence (page 10)
- School security upgrades prompt reminders about mental health awareness (page 18)
- Payroll/pension deduction offers convenience, savings,

*less stress (page 29)*

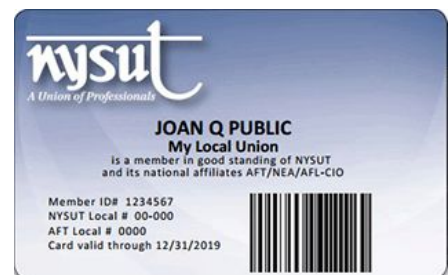
### What can I do with my NYSUT card?

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



**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

**Mike Patane (OCTA Treasurer)**





## 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](http://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



**Congratulations to our winners from Friday's OCTA Bowling Tournament!**

Final totals are not in yet, but the **Royal Crushers** raised approximately \$500 for the Autism Task Force & the **Nabowleon Dynamite** team raised approximately \$700 for the Oswego Little League.

Thank you to everyone who came out to support this cause and for simply being a part of this great family! **Also, a BIG THANK YOU to Maureen Wallace and Kyle Brown for assisting in the planning, and Nick Little for running the photo booth!** Wish these teams congratulations, and then get practicing.

Sounds like we have enough interest to do this again next year on the Friday of Regents week!

[See more PICTURES from this event on the OCTA WEBSITE](#)

Royal Crushers	OMS	Sherri Hare	Amy Odell	Maureen Wallace	Michael Cloonan	Oswego County Autism Task Force
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Nabowleon Dynamite	CER	Holly Babcock	Tina Hondro	Gary Caprin	Michelle Matott	Oswego Little League
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*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:** 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.

