

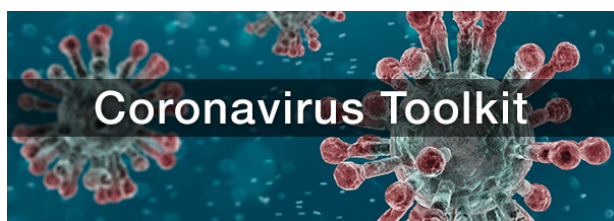
# OCTA Advocate

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



## March 2020

### NYSUT OFFERS CORONAVIRUS TOOLKIT IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS



#### [Guidance and Resources on Coronavirus](#)

We offer the following as a gateway to resources on the coronavirus outbreak, including guidance specific to public school employees, higher education faculty and to our members who work in health care.

Please note that as this situation is rapidly developing, some of the documents linked below from state and city governments may not represent current guidance, so be sure to visit the appropriate agency website to access the most up-to-date information.

#### Questions?

- Contact the NYS DOH Novel Coronavirus Hotline at 1-888-364-3065.
- For mental health counseling, New Yorkers can call the COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline at 1-844-863-9314.
- [Please click HERE or on the image below to link to more info](#)

#### NYSUT UPDATES

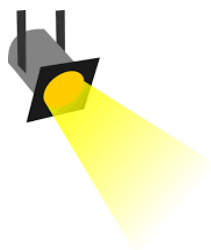
- [NYSUT statement on the state budget process.](#) March 27, 2020.
- [NYSUT Strong: Your Stories of Inspiration.](#) March 27, 2020.
- [Health Care Heroes: Thanking the Heroes on the Front Lines.](#) March 27, 2020.
- [NYSTRS Retirement: Filing for Disability Protection.](#) March 26, 2020.
- [Weekend backpack program still providing much-needed food.](#) March 26, 2020.
- [FOR PARENTS: Family Resources and Activities.](#) March 26, 2020.
- [Teaching and learning ... from home.](#) March 26, 2020.

[MORE](#)

#### STATE GOVT. UPDATES

- [DOH-DOL: Paid Sick Leave Guidance.](#) March 27, 2020.
- [DOH: Paid Sick Leave Advisory.](#) March 27, 2020.
- [SED statement regarding Elementary- and Intermediate-Level State Assessments.](#) March 20, 2020.
- [NYSED Guidance to Approved Special Education Schools.](#) March 20, 2020.
- [Additional Guidance on Statewide School Closures Due to Novel Coronavirus.](#) March 17, 2020.
- [Suspension of English Language Arts Test Shipments and Computer-based Test Window Opening.](#) March 17, 2020.

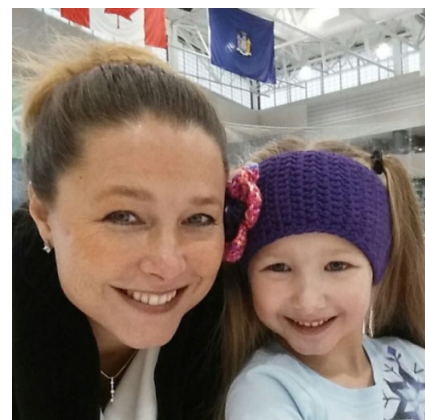
[MORE](#)



## OHS English Teacher and OCTA PRESIDENT in the March spotlight!!

What can we say about Carrie that hasn't already been said? Carrie is a constant, relentless, resilient advocate for her members, continuously and tirelessly striving for fairness in the workplace, educator rights, and solidarity.

She is a true leader, and one that the OCTA is incredibly lucky to have at the helm. Congratulations, Carrie Patane, on your well-deserved nomination. Keep up the fantastic work, and thank you for your continued leadership in these incredibly trying times.



*Know an educator in the Oswego City School District who deserves the OCTA Spotlight? Email a picture and brief description to [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org). Nominees should be OCTA members in good standing. All nominators and nominees receive a special gift courtesy of the OCTA! Thanks in advance for the support.*

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## MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES! ([CLICK HERE TO DONATE](#))

In an effort to help support the small business owners of Oswego who have generously supported our students through their donations, we (the OCTA) would like to begin a [fundraising campaign](#) which will put books in the hands of our students while also highlighting one community business each week.

Here is the plan:

The OCTA will purchase a \$25 gift card online for a local business. OCTA member Nick Little has offered to help us promote one business throughout the week. Each Monday a new business will be named and promoted. [Each Monday, the Raffle also begins!](#)

Mon, Tues & Wed - Members will be able to buy raffle chances (pay through paypal or Venmo by midnight on Wed.)

Thursday - NO MORE RAFFLE ENTRIES... We will finalize the Raffle entries in the comments section and will draw the winner LIVE at approximately 7pm.

Friday - OCTA President Carrie Patane will personally contact each winner to arrange for delivery of their \$25 gift card.

Members will be able to purchase “chances” to win the gift card for \$2 (per chance). Members can purchase an unlimited amount of chances. Payment will be made directly to Carrie Patane through Venmo or PayPal ([Carrie will provide links on OCTA Facebook page.](#))

Carrie will put the buyer’s name in the comments and will assign them a number (or numbers - depending on the number of chances you purchased). The person who is assigned the winning number is the winner of the raffle. I will reach out to them with directions for using their gift certificate - depending on the criteria the vendor has in place for online gift cards. (Hoping the businesses will Have E gift cards so you can make purchases online.)

[ANY REVENUE RAISED BEYOND THE \\$25 FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE GIFT CARD WILL GO TOWARD PURCHASING BOOKS WHICH WILL BE DONATED TO THE BOOK MOBILE AND WILL BE HANDED OUT AT THE FEEDING SITES.](#) **Anyone NOT on Facebook can contact their building president to contribute to the cause and receive updates.**

We will reassess the needs of the bookmobile and may make donations to other local projects if there is a need. For instance, if Blessings in a Backpack indicates they need donations, we can switch to that or if we can find a way to support other essential workers (CSEA or Hospital staff) we can switch to a new charity to support.

If anyone would like to nominate a business to support, please email me directly. Our first business will be The River’s End Bookstore. [CLICK HERE TO DONATE!!](#)

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*(The following letter was written by education advocate, author, and veteran teacher Penny Kittle. Want to learn more about Mrs. Kittle? Click on the link below this letter.)*

**Dear Ms. Betsy Devos, Secretary of Education,**

You are currently the appointed leader of our nation’s schools, and in the last week or so, almost all of the schools in our country were forced to close because of the COVID19 pandemic. In an attempt to support children, teachers have worked to shift to an online form of instruction that most have never tried before. This is a daunting task. What, as their leader, have you offered to support them?

Nothing.

No vision.

So I will loan you mine. It's just three things, really, and it has the power to change this world, one child at a time.

First, we must recognize that literacy is power. The ability to read, write, and speak well is the foundation of continuing to learn, of being empowered to challenge existing systems and structures of inequity and division in this country, and to develop the vision to create new possibilities, new solutions to problems, and new ways to imagine a better world. Literacy ignites all of those things.

So what do our children need right now? Access to interesting things to read.

You could arrange for little free (and sanitized) books in neighborhood libraries all over this country. You could mobilize people to build them and then to stock them with titles from lists like We Need Diverse Books. In this time of crisis, we could turn the corner on access to books that empower, encourage, and stimulate the imaginations of all children. [READ THE REST OF THE LETTER - CLICK HERE!!](#)

*Learn more about the author of this letter. Click on her image below.*



**As teacher, author, and advocate, Penny Kittle is dedicated to helping students and teachers develop a passion for reading and writing.**

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## OCTA Officer Elections Taking Place In May

Want to get actively involved in the OCTA? Feel like you could make a difference? Get on this year's BALLOT!!



Eligible, active OCTA members can run for building president and vice president positions, building representative positions, as well as one of the three OCTA officer positions up for election this year including: [OCTA President, 2nd Vice President, 4th Vice President, and Secretary](#). Elections will take place during the month of May. All positions are filled for a

two-year term (September 2020-June 2022). [CLICK HERE TO MEET YOUR CURRENT OCTA OFFICERS.](#)

Please contact your building president if interested in running or email [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org) for more information.

## RELAY FOR LIFE

Relay For Life is the signature fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Relay is staffed and coordinated by volunteers in more than 3,500 communities and 27 countries. Join us at these events and bring communities together to remember loved ones lost, honor survivors of all cancers, and raise money to help the American Cancer Society make a global impact on cancer.

Learn how to donate here:

[https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?fr\\_id=96028&pg=team&team\\_id=2511372](https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?fr_id=96028&pg=team&team_id=2511372)



## HELP FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

To help members during this anxious time, [NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust](#) is offering four free virtual seminars highlighting the need for self-care; how to help students succeed emotionally and academically; and practical tips for working from home. For NYSUT members interested in participating, see schedule of trainings and register starting on Monday, March 23.



### Register »



Peruse the many site-based and online courses and seminars we offer. Once you find what you are looking for, you can register quickly and easily through Frontline Professional Growth®.

[Register](#)

### Degree Programs »



ELT has partnered with higher education institutions to deliver graduate education programs to NYSUT members at an affordable cost.

[Degree Programs](#)

### Certification »



Check out the course work ELT offers that has been approved by NYSED to meet specific certification requirements for Students with Disabilities, Middle Level Education, TESOL, Bilingual Education, etc.

[Certification](#)



## Union-endorsed benefits designed for NYSUT members

Whether it's our endorsed homeowners or auto insurance plans, life or disability insurance, financial or legal service plans, or any of our travel, entertainment or shopping offerings, NYSUT members have the "Power of the Union" behind them when participating in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

There's no need to go it alone when Member Benefits has your back! Member Benefits acts as your advocate for any program you participate in, and we'll do our best to quickly resolve any issues or concerns you may have.

**The following is just a sampling of the dozens of endorsed programs & services available to NYSUT members and their families:**

- Auto, Home & Life Insurance
- Vision & Dental Plans
- Legal & Financial Services
- Hotel & Vacation Discounts
- Member Shopping Program
- Car & Truck Rental Discounts
- Competitive Savings Rates
- Retail Store Discounts
- Sports & Concert Tickets
- Theme Park Discounts
- Car Buying Service
- Heating Oil & Propane Savings

**We encourage you to take the time to explore the Member Benefits website by scanning the QR code to the right. Find out all we have to offer NYSUT members!**

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.



**Carrie Shuba Patane** shared a link.



Admin · 3 hrs

## **New information on NYSTRS Retirement - Filing for Disability Protection: What you need to know.**

If you, or one of your members, face a potentially life-threatening illness or surgery, consider filing a disability retirement application. Doing this provides a safety net for you and your beneficiaries.

Link to NYSTRS one-page document on how to file

[https://www.nystrs.org/nystrs/media/pdf/library/video%20transcripts/disability\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.nystrs.org/nystrs/media/pdf/library/video%20transcripts/disability_transcript.pdf)

Link to NYSTRS video on filing for protection

<https://www.nystrs.org/Library/Videos/Member-Information/Filing-for-Disability-Protection-What-You-Need-to>

PLEASE NOTE - For assistance filing out this document, please contact the NYSTRS Disability Unit directly at 1-(800)-348-7298, ext.6010 or one of the NYSTRS Teacher Trustees listed below:

David Keefe (Retiree Representative): 516-741-1241

Sheila Sullivan Buck: [sbuck@nysutmail.org](mailto:sbuck@nysutmail.org)

Beth Chetney: [bchetney@nysutmail.org](mailto:bchetney@nysutmail.org)

Ron Gross: [rgross@nysutmail.org](mailto:rgross@nysutmail.org)

NYSTRS.ORG

**[www.nystrs.org](http://www.nystrs.org)**





JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020 ISSUE  
JANUARY 05, 2020

## NYSUT Counts: Census 2020

Source: NYSUT United

# NYSUT 2020 COUNTS census

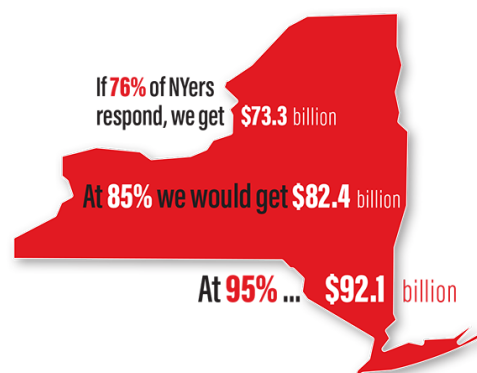
NYSUT Counts is our union's initiative to ensure every resident of the state is reported in the 2020 Census. The results affect the allocation of \$700 billion in federal funding to schools, hospitals, municipalities and needy families.

"Much like our drive to defeat the state constitutional convention referendum a couple of years ago and our successful outreach to union members after the U.S. Supreme Court's Janus decision in 2018, this crucial initiative is an opportunity to engage the power of our union," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

NYSUT is committed to holding one-to-one conversations with NYSUT members about the importance of being counted; providing curriculum resources to use with students; using direct mail and digital advertising; and working in coalition with other unions, community groups and like-minded organizations.

"For equity, fairness and justice, everyone must be counted," Pallotta said. "The census begins April 1, but it's not too early to begin to organize, educate and prepare communities for full participation."

[READ THE REST. CLICK HERE.](#)





Click on the image below to view an important message from NYSUT president, Andy Pallotta

News | Video: A Message from Andy Pallotta

## Video: A Message from Andy Pallotta

Author: Andy Pallotta, President

Share This Article...



Read more current NEWS from NYSUT. Click [HERE](#) or on the image below:

### Latest News



#### Members show what 'NYSUT Strong' means

To showcase our members' tremendous dedication to our communities and kids, we've launched a new website called NYSUT Strong. It's filled with videos, photos, articles and social media posts that exemplify the spirit and strength of NYSUT members.

[READ MORE →](#)



#### #HEALTHCAREHEROES



#### NYSUT launches campaign to send thanks to our 'Health Care Heroes'

The union is asking its members to send a note of thanks to our health care workers, using social media platforms and the hashtag #HealthCareHeroes.

[READ MORE →](#)



#### NYSUT statement on the state budget process

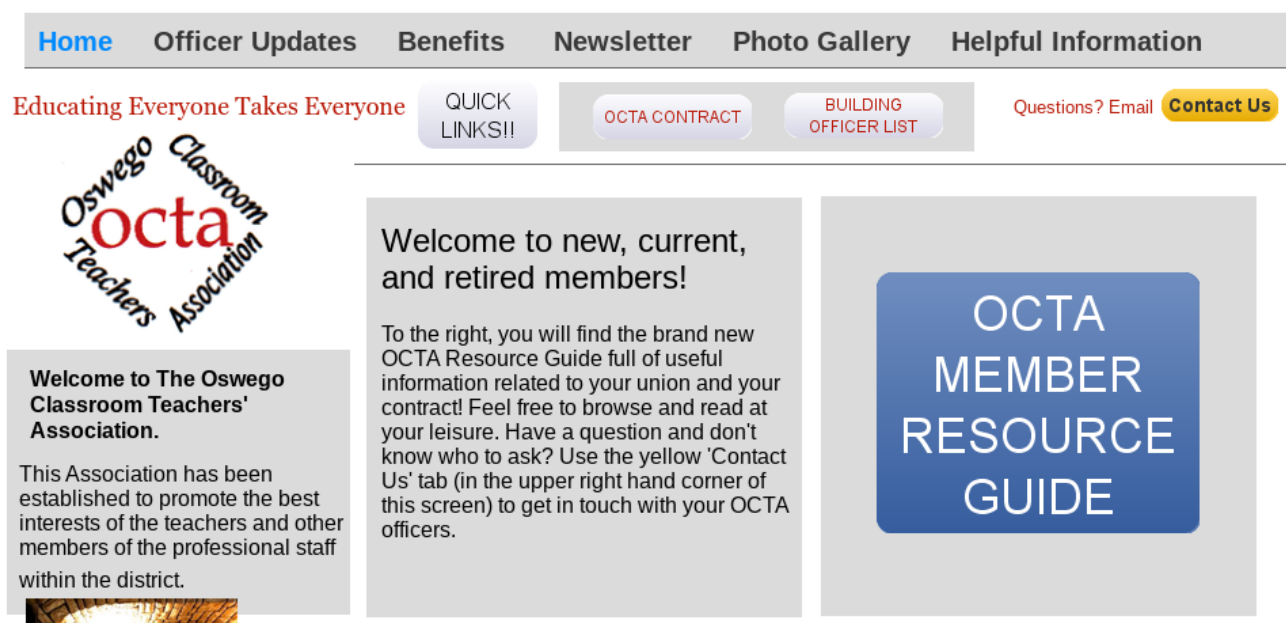
"Our public education students and families shouldn't be the ones to foot the bill for the crisis," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "New York's ultrawealthy can afford to step up and pay their fair share to help us preserve the high-quality education our dedicated educators work so hard to provide."

[READ MORE →](#)

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

Click on the screenshot of the homepage below 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!

### Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association

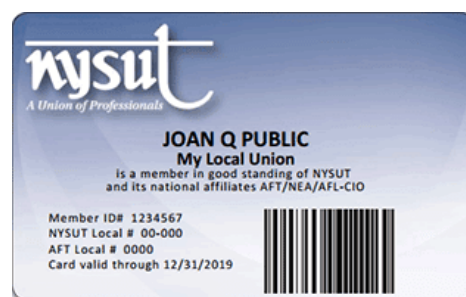


The screenshot shows the homepage of the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association (OCTA). At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, Officer Updates, Benefits, Newsletter, Photo Gallery, and Helpful Information. Below the navigation bar is a banner with the tagline "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone" and several buttons: "QUICK LINKS!!", "OCTA CONTRACT", "BUILDING OFFICER LIST", "Questions? Email", and a yellow "Contact Us" button. On the left is the OCTA logo, which is a diamond shape with "Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association" around the perimeter and "octa" in the center. Below the logo is a welcome message: "Welcome to The Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association. This Association has been established to promote the best interests of the teachers and other members of the professional staff within the district." To the right of the logo is a large blue box with the text "OCTA MEMBER RESOURCE 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:** 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.

