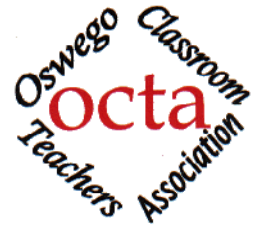


# OCTA Advocate

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



## March 2021

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Carrie Patane  
OCTA President



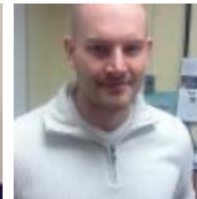
Kim LeRoy  
VP Grievance



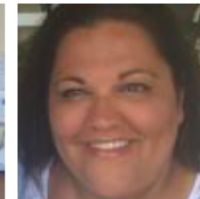
Gretchen Coakley  
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill  
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane  
Treasurer



Michelle McManus  
Secretary



Dan Rose  
VP Newsletter

## Message from your OCTA President, Carrie Patane:



As we continue to see more and more of our students returning to school over the next few weeks, don't forget to take time each day, to stop, to breathe, and to remember how lucky we are to have an opportunity to serve the Oswego community and to better so many young lives.

It is easy to lose focus and direction during times like these. With constant unknowns and new rules and regulations, emails and robo calls, online meetings, and an omni-present, ever-demanding virtual teaching schedule, many of us are working doubly hard just to keep our heads above water.

Our unity is keeping us afloat.

We have made it this far because of collaboration, communication and solidarity.  
We will weather this storm because we are together.

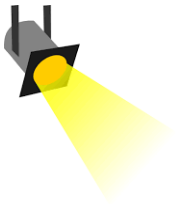
As we head toward the end of another challenging school year we must stand tall, we must stand strong and we must lean on our brothers and sisters. Teaching, no matter where it happens, is a magic that moves and motivates.

We will help bring our kids, our community, our state, our country out of this, and we will all be better on the other side.

Take care of yourselves and your families. Be well and be safe!

In solidarity,

Carrie



## KPS Teacher in the OCTA SPOTLIGHT!

**Heather Wilson is a special education teacher at**

**KPS** who goes above and beyond in all she does. She has juggled in person and remote learning always giving her best and advocating for her students. Heather is a great teaching partner as well and is highly invested in all kids no matter their needs. She quietly goes with the flow even when her position has had unique struggles and demands this year. Heather always has a smile on her face and a gentle encouraging way about her. Kindergarten and first grade students at KPS are lucky to have Ms. Wilson as part of their education team this year!



**Do you know an OCTA member who works hard at what they do? Someone whose efforts seem to go unnoticed?** *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!*

## March RETIREMENT Seminar for OCTA Members a HUGE SUCCESS!



Thanks to all OCTA members who joined our virtual NYSTRS retirement presentation last week hosted by NYSTRS representative Christine Wade! If you missed it, no worries! Feel free to explore all the links from the presentation below. Retirement presentations take place in November and March of each school year. Be on the lookout for dates and times in the OCTA Advocate! As always, please email [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org) with any retirement questions or concerns.

You can view information and slides similar to what we presented last night within the Pension and Retirement Education Program (PREP) modules called “[NYSTRS Benefits](#)” and “[Retirement Process](#).” Visit: [NYSTRS.org/PREP](http://www.nystrs.org/PREP) to view the slides and coordinating workbook pages and/or watch the presentation on YouTube by clicking on the module title. All forms are available on our public website ([www.nystrs.org/Forms](http://www.nystrs.org/Forms)). The *Designation of Beneficiary for In-service or Post-retirement Paragraph 2 Death Benefit* (NET 11.4) form is located at <https://www.nystrs.org/NYSTRS/media/PDF/Forms/net11-4.pdf>. Please also remember you may make changes through your MyNYSTRS account.

With a MyNYSTRS account, you can view your personal benefits information and access a wide range of self-service tools. You can obtain pension estimates and loan estimates; file a new designation of beneficiary, change your address, submit a loan application or file prior service claim. All Publications and Videos are accessible through the Library section of our public website ([www.nystrs.org/library](http://www.nystrs.org/library)).

You can learn more about service credit in our online publication called [You Deserve the Credit](#).

Your pension is based on your years of service credit, final average salary (FAS), age and membership tier. The Benefits chapter of our [Active Members' Handbook](#) contains details and examples. Visit: [www.nystrs.org/Library/Publications/Active-Members](http://www.nystrs.org/Library/Publications/Active-Members).

For a summary of the available options, see our brochure [Maximum or an Option: Choosing a Benefit Payment Right for You](#) or watch our two-part video “[Your NYSTRS Benefit Payment – Making the Choice That’s Right for You](#).”

To obtain projections of your annual benefit, you may use the Pension Estimator within your MyNYSTRS account or call NYSTRS (800) 348-7298 to have estimates mailed to your home. Be prepared to offer current and future salary information. You may track the progress of legislative bills (like retirement incentives) through the NYS Senate’s website: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation>.

- The link specifically tracks the NYS Senate Bill S2722A <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/s2722/amendment/a>.
- The same page also cross-references See Assembly version of this Bill: [A5087](#) (<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/a5087>).

Your EmplID is your membership identification number in our System. For security purposes, we are only able to mail your EmplID to the home address we have on record for you. Please call NYSTRS (800) 348-7298 to verify we have a current address on file for you. If you have questions or concerns, member relations representatives can be reached at (800) 348-7298, Ext., 6250.



## Want to know more about the retirement savings vehicle called the New York State Deferred Compensation Plan (AKA 457 Plan)?

Attend the virtual informational meeting on **April 21 @ 5 PM** with OCSD Rep Dan Kain who will discuss:

*How a 457 differs from a 403B*  
*Top reasons to participate in a 457 plan*  
*Income tax benefits of the 457 plan*  
*Investment options offered through the plan*  
*Flexible distribution options*  
*Lower costs*  
*Great customer service*  
*Frequently asked questions*

Interested? Get a sneak peak at the presentation through the FAQs page on the NYS DEF COMP Website: [CLICK HERE!!](#)







NYSTRS.org

**New York State Teachers' Retirement System**

## Get involved in OCTA by becoming an OCSD Retirement Delegate!

Retirement Delegates from all New York State districts meet at the NYSTRS annual convention in Saratoga Springs, NY each year. If you become a OCSD retirement delegate, you will have the opportunity to attend this annual meeting and become well versed in the areas of retirement and retirement related benefits. You will also serve as a liaison between OCTA members and the New York State Teachers Retirement System.

Delegates serve a 2 year term. Elections happen every odd year and must take place from March 1- June 1. Names must be submitted by July 1. Please send your name along to [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org) if you are interested in this important position. If no names are put forth, current delegates will be reelected for a 2 year term.



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### **OCTA Newsblast March 2021**

*Highlights from our March 2021 OCTA Meeting*

#### **NYSUT statement on federal government's decision to require state standardized exams**

**ALBANY, N.Y. Feb. 23, 2021** — New York State United Teachers today strongly rebuked the federal government's decision to mandate that states administer standardized tests this school year.

"In a year that has been anything but standard, mandating that students take standardized tests just doesn't make sense," NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said. "As the educators in the classroom, we have always known that standardized tests are not the best way to measure a child's development, and they are especially unreliable right now. We need to ensure that our students who have been hit hardest during the pandemic receive the support they need. Sizing up students with inequitable and stressful exams is not the solution."

\*Update on legislation: Senate has passed a vaccine leave bill & two-year extension of COVID death benefit.

\*On 3/1, the Senate gave final passage to two NYSUT priorities; the four-hour vaccine leave legislation and a two-year extension of last years' public employee COVID death benefit. These bills already passed the Assembly and will now be sent to the Governor.

\*Covid 19 Travel Update from Heidi Sweeney

Hello everyone,

Below is a summary of the much anticipated travel and quarantine advisory update. Please note that folks in either situation will still need to call the COVID employee hotline to speak with Christina or another nurse. Information will be required to meet the updated guidelines and be cleared to return to work. Attached are the full memos, in case you would like to review the entire message.

Please also refer to the NYS Travel Advisory site, which will have the most current information (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>).

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## OCTA Officer Elections in May!!!!



**Want to get actively involved in the OCTA? Feel like you could make a difference?**

**All enrolled, active OCTA members are eligible to run for three OCTA officer positions up for election this year:**

- Negotiations Chair - Gretchen Coakley
- Internal Public Relations - Dan Rose
- OCTA Treasurer - Mike Patane

Elections will take place during the month of May. All positions are filled for a two-year term (September 2021-June 2023).

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

**Message from Executive Director of Secondary Education & Personnel, Dr. Heidi Sweeney:**

Here's a brief summary of an option to utilize a TA to fill in, if no teacher subs are available:

1. If there is an open position and the contractual process has already been exhausted in securing a teacher volunteer, a Teaching Assistant may be asked to present the lesson plans created by the classroom teacher. Working with the Building Principal and possibly with the classroom teacher, the Teaching Assistant may provide coverage for the unfilled position.
2. Said Teaching Assistant will be paid half of the 50 day uncertified teacher sub rate for their assistance in an elementary classroom (currently, the pay will be \$59). In a secondary situation, the rate is set at \$25 per period.
3. All other stipulations must be followed (3.8.1 and 3.8.2 in OCTA II).
4. The TA filling in can submit/request a sub to fill in for their (now) open TA spot.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

thanks!

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## FACT SHEET

## 2021 NYS Assessments & Diploma Requirements



March 2021

Fact Sheet No. 21-06

On February 12, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) submitted a formal request to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to waive state testing requirements at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The USDOE informed states that it will not grant a blanket waiver for state assessments. Pending a final decision from the USDOE regarding NYSED's waiver request, districts will need to prepare to proceed with the Spring 2021 test administrations.

At the March Board of Regents Meeting, there were several amendments to Commissioner's Regulations adopted for the 2020-2021 school year. These amendments allow exemptions to the diploma, credential, and endorsement requirements associated with the Regents examinations, pathway assessments, alternative assessments, technical assessments, and locally developed tests and include the June and August 2021 examination administrations so that students are still able to meet their diploma requirements. This Fact Sheet outlines what you need to know about state assessment and diploma requirements for 2021.

If you email orders to [cpatane@oswego.org](mailto:cpatane@oswego.org), be sure to include product name, color, price, and building you work in.

[READ THE REST: CLICK HERE](#)

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March 11, 2019

To: OCSD Faculty & Staff

**Re: Retirement**

From: Heidi Sweeney, Executive Director of Secondary Education & Personnel

Please note that information regarding retirement can be found in all bargaining unit contracts. The retirement letter template is available in the Personnel Office Teamdrive, in the Personnel forms folder, then in each of the bargaining unit folders (Sample Retirement Letter). Directions and relevant information are included, as well as the letter template. There is a 90 day notification requirement and letters should be submitted to the Personnel Office. Please contact me if you have additional questions.

**Thinking of retiring? Click on the link below for the retirement letter template**  
[Retirement Letter Template](#)



March 25, 2021

# Women's history must be amplified year-round

Author: Kara Smith

Source: NYSUT Communications



NYSUT members celebrated Women's History Month throughout March with a series of regional and statewide programs spotlighting the many contributions of women.

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango participated in several events, including a #NYSUTchat on Twitter discussing the lack of women's history in school curricula, and another celebrating the true story of 9to5, National Association of Working Women, a groundbreaking, women-led organization that inspired the 1980s film of the same name starring Lily Tomlin, Jane Fonda and Dolly Parton.

Julia Reichert's and Steven Bogner's documentary [\*9to5: The Story of a Movement\*](#), chronicles the history of a group of clerical workers who joined together to advocate for better pay, advancement opportunities and an end to workplace sexual harassment in the early 1970s. In 1981, 9to5 partnered with SEIU and formed SEIU District 925, a nationwide labor union for office workers.

"Women are missing from our curriculums and that sparked my interest in telling this story," said Reichert, noting that bringing class, gender and union history together is important. "Lots of union knowledge has been lost. This was a chance to bring it back, from a feminist perspective."

[WATCH THE VIDEO: CLICK HERE!](#)

## Legal or financial concerns? NYSUT Member Benefits can help

Whether it's assisting NYSUT members with everyday essentials, important choices about insurance needs, or making prudent decisions about financial and legal concerns, NYSUT Member Benefits can help.



**Scan the QR codes below to learn more about the following endorsed programs and services.**

**Legal Service Plan:** For a low annual price, our Legal Service Plan provides unlimited toll-free legal advice; a simple will, health care proxy, living will and power of attorney; and guaranteed maximum fees for many legal matters. If a NYSUT member who is a current participant in the Legal Service Plan passes away due to COVID-19, the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco has offered to extend a number of services at no cost to the member's family.



SCAN ME

### Financial Learning Center:

We recently contracted with popular financial publisher Kiplinger's Personal Finance for our new Financial Learning Center. This interactive microsite offers numerous articles on a wide variety of financial topics, including selecting the best value in tax planning software and more. No matter your point in life or financial situation, you are sure to find something of interest.



SCAN ME

**Mid-Island Mortgage:** With our UnionDirect Mortgage Discount Program presented by Mid-Island Mortgage, NYSUT members receive special purchase and refinancing mortgage discounts for a variety of home-related needs. Whether you're looking to buy a home, lower your mortgage payment or planning a home improvement project, Mid-Island Mortgage can help you save up to \$2,700 on lender fees and closing costs.



SCAN ME

### Cambridge Credit

**Counseling:** Our program with Cambridge Credit Counseling can assist NYSUT members with better understanding their student loan re-payment and debt consolidation options. NYSUT members can receive a no-cost, no-obligation, consultation with a Cambridge certified counselor. Cambridge is also the provider of NYSUT's Student Loan Debt Webinars.



SCAN ME

**NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families, including the following options:**



DINING &  
SHOPPING  
DISCOUNTS



TRAVEL  
&  
TOURS



CAR &  
TRUCK  
RENTALS



LIFE  
INSURANCE



AUTO  
&  
HOME



LONG-TERM  
CARE &  
DISABILITY

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org), call 800-626-8101 or scan the QR codes above.

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

## OCTA Leadership

Position	Name	Building	Phone #	email
President	Carrie Patane	OHS 341-2202	315-374-8111	cpatane
1st VP - Grievance	Kim LeRoy	MIN 341-2641	315-591-5605	kleroy
2nd VP - Negotiations	Gretchen Coakley	KPS 341-2500	315-591-3678	gcoakley
3rd VP - PR	Dan Rose	OMS 341-2300	315-254-5657	drose
4th VP - Political Action	Jennifer Cahill	FLS 341-2700	315-342-0891	jcahill
Treasurer	Mike Patane	OMS 341-2300	315-343-3926	mpatane
Secretary	Michelle McManus	FLS 341-2700	315-529-1049	mmcmanu2

## 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	Amy Armet. Pres	aarmet
Heather Sugar Pres	hsugar	Jamie Turtura VP	jturtura
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 William	swilla2	Nick Little	nlittle
		Julie Tubolino	jtubolin
<b>OMS</b>	<b>315-341-2300</b>	<b>MIN</b>	<b>315-341-2600</b>
Lori Bradway-Veiga Pres	lbradway	Carol Janice Co-Pres	cjanice
Peg Holt VP	mholt	Amy Sullivan Co-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
Dan Rose	drose	Crystal Mason	cmason
Michelle Cooper	mcooper	Keri Hunter	khunter
<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
Jessica Burridge Pres	jburridg	Teddy Beers VP	tbeers
Hope Mazuroski	hmazuros	Molly Clark	mclark2
Carolyn Slobodian	cslobodi	Holly Deban	hbabcock
Gretchen Coakley	gcoakley	Ann Jadus	ajadus
<b>Sub President- Ed Stacy</b>	<b>Sub Co Vice Presidents - Meg McLaughlin &amp; Beth McCrobie</b>		



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

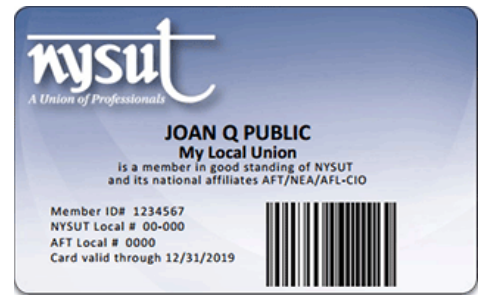
Click on the screenshot of the homepage below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide!

### Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association

The screenshot shows the OCTA website homepage. 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.

