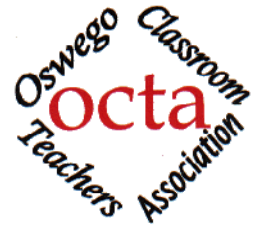


OCTA Advocate

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



May/June 2022

Use the following Table of Contents to navigate this month's ADVOCATE!!

Click on the bookmark to jump to the article. Click on the OCTA ADVOCATE hyperlink in the page header to navigate back to this table of contents.

[Message from OCTA President Carrie Patane](#)

Save the Date: End of the year SOCIAL @ Cheap Seats (June 17th 3-6pm)

[OCTA SPOTLIGHT](#)

[OPEN ENROLLMENT \(Benefits\) Happening NOW through June 6th!](#)

NOTE: If you have vision and wish to keep it, you MUST re-enroll!

[OCTA DENTAL ENROLLMENT INFO](#)

[OCTA Welcomes Dr. Heidi Sweeney as NEW Dental Administrator](#)

[2022 OCTA Scholarship Winners](#)

[May OCTA Newsblast](#)

[School Budget passes!! THANK YOU for VOTING!](#)

[NYSUT STATEMENT on recent school violence](#)

[OCTA Officer Elections: MAY 2022](#)

[Summer PD Offerings: 2022](#)

[OCTA Resource Guide](#)

[JOIN OCTA MEMBERS FOR AN END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATION: JUNE 17](#)

[NYSUT Member Benefits](#)

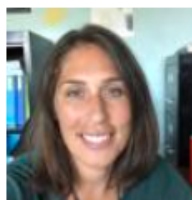
[Access the OCTA Website for EVEN MORE UNION INFORMATION](#)



Carrie Patane
OCTA President



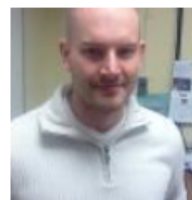
Kim LeRoy
VP Grievance



Jess Burrige
VP Negotiations



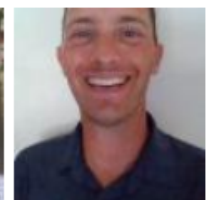
Jenn Cahill
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane
Treasurer



Michelle McManus
Secretary



Dan Rose
VP Newsletter

Message from your OCTA President, Carrie Patane:



To say that this has been a(nother) difficult year would be an understatement.

The lingering pandemic coupled with new and old state mandates, exam uncertainty, live streaming and now a resurgence of violence on school campuses across the country only reinforces the importance and immediacy of our jobs.

It is clear that we are needed now, more than ever.

Teachers, teaching assistants, special education and language instructors, school psychologists, school nurses, art, music, physical education home and careers and technology specialists, health and wellbeing coaches, literacy and math specialists, librarians and computer experts, career and finance instructors, summer school, after school, before school instructors, cafeteria workers, bus monitors, hall sweepers, school custodians and maintenance staff, front office receptionists and main office staff, attendance monitors, discipline clerks and behavior specialists and administration - you are real, three dimensional, live human beings emitting emotion and inspirational words and compassion . . . and smiles. And laughter.

And joy.

And yes, even sorrow at times.

But it's all there on your face. You are the ones affecting change. You are the ones being seen. You are the ones on the front lines ready to fight for what you believe. But mostly, from what I've seen . . . **You are the ones willing to give.** You give all you have to ensure that the students in front of you have an opportunity to succeed, to flourish, to grow into someone who knows the difference between love and hate, real and unreal, life and death. You give and you give and nothing . . . NOTHING . . . will ever stand between you and this opportunity to promote change. I see this happening every day, and I need you to know that **I am inspired by you every day.**

With all that being said, **PLEASE join us on June 17 from 3-6 at Cheap Seats** in a celebration of unity, a celebration of the completion of another year of schooling, and a celebration of those who continue to push forward, to innovate, to collaborate, to **INSPIRE . . . Here's to YOU!** This event, hosted by the OCTA will include food, door prizes, a lotto raffle, and some of the best company I know! (No formal volleyball tournament will take place, but you are welcome to play pick-up games!)

Let's get together this year after a long break and take the opportunity to welcome the much needed summer. Hope to see you ALL there.

*In solidarity,
Carrie*





Recognize any of your colleagues in this month's OCTA SPOTLIGHT? Click on the image below to read all about these amazing OCTA members and education advocates!!

OCTA SPOTLIGHT

The Oswego Classroom Teachers Association is proud to announce the recipients of the April SPOTLIGHT! Congratulations to all of the winners, you deserve the honor.



Paula Weigelt (Minetto)- Paula has been teaching full time for 37 years and has been in the education business for 39.

Cathy Pepper (Minetto)- is a Teaching Assistant at Minetto School. Cathy has been with the district for 20 years.

Deborah Brancato (KPS)- Deborah is a tremendous help to everyone at Kingsford Park Elementary School. She always has a smile on her face and spreads joy wherever she goes.

Ashley Jenkins (Riley / KPS)- Ashley is an amazing special education teacher for Riley and KPS. She is exceptional at managing students with difficult challenges and behavioral needs.

Mark Fierro (OHS)- Mark is retiring this year after 34 years in education - 32 at OHS.

Theresa Lee (Fitzhugh Park)- Teresa's kindness and compassion are not just for her students but also for her team and the staff.

Jamie Brancato (Fitzhugh Park)- Jaime is just finishing her 28th year as a Reading Teacher.

Alison Anderson (OMS)- Alison is a reading and literacy specialist at OMS.

Click [HERE](#) to link to the [OCTA FACEBOOK](#) page for more information on these award winners! 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 your building president. Maybe they will be honored in the OCTA Advocate!

OPEN ENROLLMENT INFORMATION!!!!

Submitted by Melissa Syrell

You should receive an email blast from Employee Navigator regarding open enrollment. It will run from today through 6/7/2022. If you did not receive it, please let me know right away.

AS ALWAYS, I CAN HELP WALK YOU THROUGH THIS PROCESS IF NEEDED

There are a few changes regarding vision so **PLEASE** read below and read any subsequent emails OR ATTACHMENTS that you might get:

Briefly, we are *changing our vision carrier as of 7/1/2022*. The new carrier will be through Ameritas.

- Ameritas is offering **two** different network options for members to choose from: **VSP & EyeMed**.
- Detailed summaries and links to find providers will be available on the open enrollment portal.
- **OCTA: You MUST log in to select between the VSP and EyeMed plan options. If you do not log in to elect these options, you will lose all vision coverage as of 7/1/22.**
- **NON-OCTA:** Vision AND dental will be available for open enrollment this year. This is a **change**! Dental was supposed to be closed until 2023 but with changing vision plans, we opened up dental as well. Moving forward, both dental and vision enrollment will be the usual every 2 years.

PORTAL INFORMATION:

Please note the following:

1. If you have not registered your ENV connect (Employee Navigator) account, please refer to the separate email blast with directions on how to do so.
2. If you carry flexible spending or dependent care spending accounts, these **DO NOT automatically continue into the next year**. If you want these plans again in the 22/23 school year, you **MUST** log into your Employee Navigator portal and re-enroll.
3. For technical support for the portal or any login issues, please contact ENV at 315-641-5848.



OCTA Important Update:

Regarding Vision Coverage

What is New:

- Effective 7/1/22, our vision insurance provider is changing from Davis to Ameritas.
- Ameritas is offering two different network options for members to choose from: VSP & EyeMed.
 - Detailed benefit summaries, and links to find providers are available on the open enrollment portal.
- Vision will be available for open enrollment this year.
- Moving forward, open enrollment for this vision plan will be every year: 2022, 2023, 2024 etc.

What Does This Mean?

- If you are in the OCTA group, **you MUST log in** to select between the VSP and EyeMed vision plan options.
 - **If you do not log in to elect these options, you will lose your vision coverage starting 7/1/22.**
- After this open enrollment period, members will not be able to add, remove, or change your vision plans until open enrollment in 2023.

OCTA Dental Open Enrollment Information

OCTA's dental benefits Open Enrollment will run from Monday June 6 - Friday, June 17.

There will be opportunities to enroll and submit paperwork electronically or meet in person at the OCTA office. (See files attached below.) Enrollment forms will be emailed on Monday. Heidi Sweeney will be available in the OCTA office (122 West 2nd Street) for those who would like to enroll in person or who have questions that might need a personal conversation on **two dates**. ANYONE with outstanding questions or enrollment concerns should meet with Heidi on these two dates.

IN PERSON ENROLLMENT: June 9th and June 16th, from 3-5pm.

If there are **no changes** to your current enrollment selections, **nothing** is needed at this time.

RATES:

OCTA Dental Premiums 2022-2023		
Coverage	Per pay period deduction (21 pay periods)	Total Deduction for School Year
Individual	\$2.50	\$52.50
Member + 1	\$27.50	\$577.50
Family	\$55.00	\$1,155.00
Two in Unit (family coverage)	\$27.50	\$577.50

Sincerely,
Your OCTA Benefit Board

The OCTA would like to welcome Dr. Heidi Sweeney as the new Dental Administrator of the OCTA Dental Plan. Many thanks go out to Patrick Armet for his years of work on behalf of the OCTA members.

As the transition continues throughout open enrollment, Patrick and Heidi will work collaboratively to make changes and update information. Please continue to email the ocatdentalplan@gmail.com address to communicate with Heidi. She plans to check emails several times a week and will respond to any inquiries by each Wednesday or Sunday. Outstanding questions or requests will be addressed as soon as possible.



The 2022 OCTA Scholarship Committee selected 15 recipients of this year's scholarship.

Below are recipients of the 2022 OCTA Scholarship:

- ❖ Lukas Cady
- ❖ Mary Kate Cloonan
- ❖ John Hall
- ❖ Autumn Lee
- ❖ Emma McManus
- ❖ John O'Leary
- ❖ Dairo Reyes
- ❖ Neil Roman
- ❖ Jacob Sledziona
- ❖ Henry Sweeney
- ❖ Ryan Symborski
- ❖ Tyler Tice
- ❖ Olivya Tobin
- ❖ Allison Tyrrell
- ❖ Brenna Williams

NOTE: Jeans Week for 2022-23 OCTA Scholarship are:

- October 24-28, 2022
- February 13-17, 2023





OCTA Newsblast May 2022

Highlights from our May OCTA Meeting

***End of the year PARTY - SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 17th!** We will be hosting an OCTA "Round Table" gathering on June 17th at Cheap Seats. Food will be served from 3pm-6pm courtesy of Cheap Seats.

***Health and Safety - go to Union 1st**

The district received a complaint filed with the Department of Labor. A current or former employee submitted a complaint. Carrie and all Union leadership met with Dr. Calvin regarding this complaint. The complaint that was received was unfounded. **Please go to the Union first before making a complaint.**

***Congratulations to everyone!** We have been awarded the [Dan Sanders Award](#) for our contributions to Vote Cope this year!

***Board of Education vote-** Heather DelConte & Lynda Sereno terms are up at the end of June. David Crisafulli and Heidi Sweeney were the only two to turn in petitions. The OCTA BOE candidate questionnaire was given to both candidates. Here is a link to [Heidi Sweeney's responses](#) The deadline to turn in the questionnaire was Monday 5/9. As of 5/10 Mr. Crisafulli has not turned anything in.

[2022 School Budget Newsletter link](#) this has all the budget and proposition information needed for voting on May 17th. Also, remember to vote for 1 Library Trustee.

***OCTA Executive Board-** The positions of President (Carrie Patane), 2nd VP (Negotiations-Jessica BurrIDGE), 4th VP (Political Action- Jennifer Cahill), Secretary (Michelle McManus) were up for reelection for the 2022-2024 school years. The incumbents will fill the positions as no one ran against them.

***Dental-**Heidi Sweeney will be taking over the administration of the OCTA dental plan. Many thanks go out to Patrick Armet for his years of work on behalf of the OCTA members.

As the transition continues throughout open enrollment, Patrick and Heidi will work collaboratively to make changes and update information. Please continue to email the ocatdentalplan@gmail.com address to communicate with Heidi. She plans to check emails several times a week and will respond to any inquiries by each Wednesday or Sunday. Outstanding questions or requests will be addressed as soon as possible.

***OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kc9DjnHtYkQTqCKMI2iw4Krey8BFebZtAO5i1wM05Gs>

***COVID: To Report a Positive At Home COVID Test in OSWEGO COUNTY: PLEASE REPORT!!!**

https://health.oswegocounty.com/information/2019_novel_coronavirus/isolation_quarantine_guidance.php

OCS D Employee COVID Hotline: 315-341-2055

OCS D Student COVID Hotline: 315-341-2050

Thank you to ALL voters who helped pass this year's School Budget!

Submitted by OCTA VP Jenn Cahill

Educators make their voices heard in school board elections and help to pass 99 percent of school budgets

Source: NYSUT Media Relations



- [**UPDATE: NYSUT Fact Sheet 22-8: 99.0% Passage Rate for School Budget**](#)

ALBANY, N.Y. May 18, 2022 – Educators and their unions across the state made their voices heard in school board races on Tuesday, helping elect 295 candidates in districts statewide, according to a New York State United Teachers analysis of election results.

Of those that teachers and school staff supported through local endorsements and get out the vote efforts, 60 NYSUT members were elected to school boards in every corner of the state. A number went through the statewide union's Pipeline Project, a training program for union and community members that helps prepare candidates to run for office at all levels.

[READ MORE. CLICK HERE.](#)

May 24, 2022

NYSUT statement mourning victims of Texas elementary school shooting

Source: NYSUT Media Relations

ALBANY, N.Y. May 24, 2022 — New York State United Teachers President Andy Pallotta issued the following statement today mourning the victims of the elementary school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

“Our hearts are broken. In New York, our emotions are still raw from the senseless mass murder at a Buffalo supermarket just more than a week ago, and now we watch as our colleagues in Texas, the students they devote themselves to and their families are forced to grapple with yet another horrific mass shooting. We stand with the families of those killed and the school communities affected by this tragedy.

“What will it take to put a stop to these hateful, sickening acts of violence? Our schools must be a safe place for all. As we mourn those who have lost their lives, we must also stand up and demand better for children, for parents, for educators and for communities across the nation.”

[Click on the image below to learn more and get involved.](#)



Safe Schools for All:

[About the Task Force](#)[Events and Activism](#)[Resources](#)

Safe Schools for All

In addition to the immediate actions and advocacy that NYSUT and our national unions are engaged in in Albany and in Washington, NYSUT is launching a new [Safe Schools for All Task Force](#) to hear from our members on the issue of school violence and get your input on next steps. The Task Force is charged with building a list of recommendations for how our state and districts can best support safe public schools at the center of every community. We will focus on several key areas most crucial to building safer school environments. [LEARN MORE](#)

OCTA Elections in May!!!!

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

All enrolled, active OCTA members in good standing are eligible to run as building reps. Former building reps may run for Building Presidents. Former Building Presidents can run for three OCTA officer positions up for election this year:

Officer Elections: (current members running)	Building President Elections: (current members running)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCTA President (Carrie Patane) • OCTA 2nd VP (Jessica Burrridge) • OCTA 4th VP (Jenn Cahill) • OCTA Secretary (Michelle McManus) 	<p>SEE LIST ATTACHED:</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/document/d/15NoAO8qpGs1Et7Sxwb4fOTYSm4u94lt3KyOrP_FhNA0/edit#bookmark=id.pnww2z8kqpax</p>

Elections will take place during the month of May. All positions are filled for a two-year term (September 2022-June 2024). **Please see your building president if interested in running or email drose@oswego.org for more information. If there are no additional nominations, the secretary will cast one vote for all unopposed positions at our May OCTA meeting.**

SUMMER PD OFFERINGS!

Please explore the [summer PD offerings](#). Summer is a great time to strengthen your teaching skills! (Click on the image below to scroll through these summer offerings).



The OCTA Member Resource Guide! Your one-stop shop for all things OCTA!!



Resource Guide

2020-2021

Contract Language valid through June 2020


****Join the OCTA Facebook Page..... Search OCTA and send a request for approval****

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE RESOURCE GUIDE IN ITS ENTIRETY!!!!!!](#)

**Flex Spending
Prescription Drugs
Member Benefits
Mentoring
Dress Code
Bereavement**


**Cancer Screening
Snow Days
Social Media
Sick Bank
Maternity Leave
Work Day**

**Paycheck
Investments
Evaluations
Electronic Forms
Student Teachers
Substitut**



**Come Celebrate!!
When? JUNE 17, 3 - 6 PM
Where? Cheap Seats
Why? Because you deserve it!!
*Food and Fun presented by the OCTA***

Explore all your union membership has to offer!



It's never too early
(or too late) to make
plans!

Find out how NYSUT
Member Benefits can
help you make the
most of your summer.

Check out the MB Discounts & Deals program in the
Shopping, Travel & Personal section of our website to start
planning (and saving) today.

Thinking of your next big adventure? A family trip or summer vacation? Member Benefits Discounts & Deals offers great savings of up to 50% on flights, hotels, car rentals, attractions and more when planning a trip.

Whether you want to explore other countries or the United States, Member Benefits Discounts & Deals has you covered. From London to Miami to Las Vegas to Paris, there are an abundance of other savings available as well! Restaurants, museums, theme parks, walking or bike tours, ziplining, sightseeing cruises, city exploration activities ... the list goes on. You can access these deals either online or through the MB Deals mobile app.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,
visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or
calling 800-626-8101.



**Have a business
you want to
promote in the
OCTA
advocate?
Reach out to
Dan Rose!**

**BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY**
HomeServices



Thomas Wiegand
Real Estate Salesperson

CNY Realty
17 W. Cayuga Street
Oswego, NY 13126
Cell 315-529-0088
Bus 315-343-6666
Fax 315-343-6777
twiegand13126@gmail.com
bhhsdenyrealty.com

MLS REALTOR

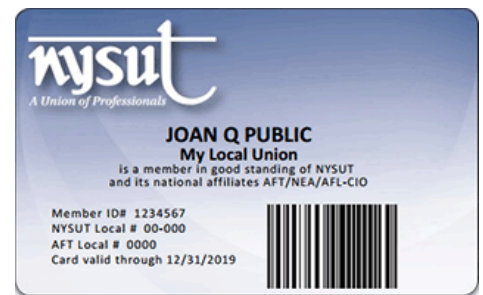
A member of the franchise system of BHH Affiliates, LLC

**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 1st Street, Oswego, NY. **President:** Carrie Patane, **VP Grievance:** Kim LeRoy **VP Negotiations:** Jessica Burrridge **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.

