

OCTA Advocate

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



OCTOBER 2024

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 your OCTA PRESIDENT -](#)

[NEW OCTA APPAREL SALE!](#)

[Who's in the OCTA Spotlight?](#)

[VOTE-COPE SUCCESS!](#)

[Fall MARY KAY DISCOUNTS for OCTA MEMBERS!](#)

[SIGN UP NOW FOR RETIREMENT SEMINAR hosted by the NYSTRS!](#)

[Visit MYNYSTRS to view your current retirement BENEFIT PROFILE](#)

[November 19 is SRP Recognition Day!](#)

[Dental Benefit Information](#)

[OCTA Newsblast: OCTOBER, 2024](#)

[Read the Latest Union NEWS - 'THE STAKES OF THIS ELECTION'](#)

[LINK to OCTA Webpage & Resource Guide](#)

Meet your 2024-2025 OCTA Officers!



Carrie Patane
OCTA President



Kim LeRoy
VP Grievance



Jess Burrige
VP Negotiations



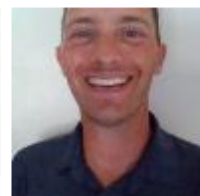
Jenn Cahill
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane
Treasurer



Michelle McManus
Secretary



Dan Rose
VP Newsletter

Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane



As you know, the OCTA is purchasing the [Legal Assistance Plan](#) for all of our members this year. Included in this plan are a FREE Will, Healthcare Proxy, Power of Attorney, and Living Will. Even if you already have a will we encourage you to take advantage of this benefit and update it. Each member can share this benefit with 2 family members including children 26 and under, a spouse, parents, grandparents, or in-laws! Note: Any additional set above the 3 sets is \$100 per set. There is an additional \$50 fee per will if the member would like to add a Minors Trust (to hold the children's inheritance longer than 18). The minors trust is optional.

Any member who scheduled an appointment to meet with a member of the Feldman, Kramer, & Monaco legal team via ZOOM please remember to be available on your scheduled day and time. A lawyer should be sending info through email soon for those who signed up for Nov 7,8,15.

The only openings that remain on the schedule are on Nov 22nd! Sign-up using the Parent Square post. Don't forget to include your email address and phone number in a note so your lawyer can send you a zoom invite.

IMPORTANT: You must fill out AS MUCH of this [questionnaire](#) as possible before your appointment so the lawyer can go over what you have already answered, answer any questions you may have, advise you on your decisions, and ultimately tell you where to send the completed questionnaire so that it can be drawn up at the office and prepared for your signature.

What's next: We will be planning WILL DAYS in the Spring, at which time the lawyers will come to our buildings to notarize all of the completed documents and obtain any necessary signatures.

Any other questions please feel free to contact FK&M:

Email: wills@fkmlaw.com **Phone:** +1 (800) 832-5182 (NY Calls Only)

In solidarity,

Carrie



PS: Don't forget to wear your union strong shirts and show your solidarity on Payday Fridays!

NEW APPAREL SALE!

You can get the UNION STRONG design in long sleeves or sweatshirts, order BUC STRONG apparel, or see the NEW VESTS with a NEW LOGO!

Sale Ends Nov 10th. Orders Support our OCTA Scholarship!

ORDER ONLINE! <https://octafall24.itemorder.com/>



Congratulations to our most recent OCTA Spotlight Recipients!



Caleb Butchko (Riley) is from Baldwinsville, NY and went to school at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam.

This is his first year with the OCSD.

Caleb is currently an Elementary Music Teacher and loves making music with his students every day.

He likes to spend time with his family and dogs.

Caleb looks forward to continuing to better himself as an educator with each year that passes. Welcome to the OCSD Caleb, we are so happy to have you with us!

Mlnetto would like to welcome first grade teacher

Brianna Ritzel to elementary school and the Oswego City School District. She comes to us from Granby Elementary in Fulton.

Brianna has always wanted to be a teacher. She used to play pretend with her friends when she was younger and she was always 'the teacher.' She has been blessed to work alongside some amazing teachers who helped create a safe space for her to learn and grow. Brianna says she wanted to pass that favor on to someone else.

Family is important to Brianna who has two beautiful children of her own- her daughter Riley is three and her son Wesley is just under a year and a half. Her life is always on the move and with her family living so far away, they are always traveling somewhere to visit someone. Her favorite foods are pickles, french fries, and fresh mangoes. Outside of school Brianna loves to bake with her kids. They are an outdoor family and enjoy spending time in Cape Vincent. They love the Buffalo Bills and can often be found yelling at the TV on most Sundays.



This October Fitzhugh Park is proud to recognize physical education teacher **Julie Tubolino** as our OCTA Spotlight veteran member! Julie has been a physical education teacher for 22 years. Before coming to FPS 10 years ago, she spent time with the OMS and Minetto Elementary. We asked Julie why she chose to become a physical education teacher and she replied matter-of-factly, “I became a PE teacher because I loved exercise and kids, so it made sense.” You will definitely agree when you see how Julie truly lights up when she is actively engaged in PE activities alongside her students, singing to tunes while jump roping, or listening to a student tell a joke or a funny story. She said some of her favorite moments in teaching include “watching the kids’ faces when they are able to do something, when they finally ‘get it.’” And we, at FPS, are so appreciative that she is here helping our students to do just that! Thank you, Julie!



Samantha Austin, is the new building substitute teacher at the high school. Samantha attended SUNY Oswego for both her undergraduate and graduate studies, where she initially studied communications but ultimately decided to switch to education. In May, she graduated with her certification and master's degree in secondary education for social studies. Samantha completed her student teaching residency in the Syracuse City School District. Samantha says she always wanted to be a teacher because she enjoys helping people, and she's a huge nerd who loves getting others excited about learning new things. When she is not in the classroom, Samantha enjoys taking walks around town to get some fresh air, no matter the season!

THANK YOU, VOTE-COPE Contributors!

Thank you to all OCTA Members who contributed to this year's Vote Cope Campaign and continue to make contributions every year. Thanks to all building leaders who helped organize and collect.



A reminder to vote November 5th

Oswego County Voter Info:

https://www.oswegocounty.com/government/board_of_elections/voter_information.php

Onondaga County Voter Info: <https://onondaga.gov/elections/>

Cayuga County Voter Info: <https://www.cayugacounty.us/196/Board-of-Elections>

Vote Cope Campaign 2024 ended October 25th. Thank you to all the reps that help get the word out for "\$6 to have their 6" and to all of our generous members that have donated to Vote Cope!

Tier Six info: <https://united.nysut.org/issue/july-august-2023/help-nysut-fix-tier-six/>

MARY KAY®

beaut^enews™

**Mother's Day MARY KAY
Friends and Family discount!**

Orders due by Cyber Monday!

30% off all orders.

NO TAX

NO SHIPPING



Must PICK up orders OR tell me the building you work in so I can get your order to you at work.

Order by email at cpatane@oswego.org or order online at www.marykay.com/mrspatane

New York State Teachers Retirement System



SIGN UP NOW!!! drose@oswego.org

**New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS)
Benefits Presentation (presented by OCTA)**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19 from 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.

A real NYSTRS Representative will discuss key topics you need to know.

The session will include an overview of pension calculation rules by tier, as well as:

- How to be sure you receive all the service credit for which you are eligible.
- Important service milestones and their impact on your pension calculation.
- The various pension payment options.
- Death benefits and their continuation into retirement.
- The steps to take to file for retirement.

We encourage general questions in this public setting. Specific questions concerning your individual situation should be discussed during an individual benefits consultation or by calling the Retirement System at (800) 348-7298.

Please join us for this one-hour NYSTRS Retirement Benefits Consultation on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19 starting at 5:30 P.M. (location TBD).

PLEASE let Dan Rose (drose@oswego.org) know that you are interested in attending this in person presentation. Food and drink will be available courtesy of the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association.

Want to know more about the NYSTRS and the benefits available to you as an educator in New York State? Visit the [ACTIVE MEMBERS](#) section of the NYSTRS Website. You can also create an account and view your service credit and current benefit profile by clicking here: [MYNYSTRS](#)

On November 19th, remember to thank your School Related Professionals and help us celebrate!

SRP Recognition Day is Nov. 19, 2024, in New York State.

It is a well-deserved honor for the hard-working women and men who help educate, feed and transport students, monitor their health, administer school offices, and maintain school facilities — providing a safe and nurturing environment for student-centered learning.

School-Related Professionals serve the education community in many capacities and include:

Teacher Aides/Monitors, Teaching Assistants, School Nurses , Secretaries/Clerks, Custodians/Cleaners, Bus Drivers/Bus Monitors, Food Services, Security Officers





DENTAL INFO!

Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt
octadentalplan@gmail.com

Did you know as a Delta Dental Member you gain access to exclusive perks such as: Virtual Dentistry, BrushSmart, Hearing aids and LASIK discounts, LifePerks, Wellness resources?

Members can easily get all the info on these perks - [just click HERE!](#)

If you need to establish a new dental provider or find a specialist in your area you can search for dental providers by [visiting this link!](#)

Click on [this hyperlink](#) to read the most recent issue of Delta Dental's monthly magazine called [GRIN!](#)



[Click HERE to create an account with Delta Dental or log in to your existing Delta Dental account!](#)



OCTA Blast October 2024

Highlights from our October 2024 OCTA Meeting

Schooltool Notes- Please remember to use Schooltool Notes to record important information regarding interactions with students and/or their families. Notes should be factual and must not include the names of other students. Ensure that the notes are set to the GLOBAL setting, so they will transfer with the student if they move to another school within the district and so staff can see the note too.

OCTA Gear- OCTA Members are always going above and beyond. When you volunteer your time, assist other groups with their fundraising, or attend school functions outside of your contractual hours, be sure to wear your OCTA gear to demonstrate our dedication to our schools, students, and community. **WE ARE ALL MAKE UP OCTA** and as individuals, we represent the group. Need new swag? Order by Nov 10th! <https://octafall24.itemorder.com/>

Don't Forget NYS Mandated Reporter Training: [NYS Mandated Reporter Training](#) REQUIRED for **ALL** members by April 2025.

VOTE COPE-

Please consider giving to VOTE COPE this year. Last year just over 250 of our 490 plus members gave VOTE COPE. **Let's increase this number.**

We are asking all members to consider giving \$6 for Tier 6, to show that "We've got their 6; we've got their back!"

Join the Fix Tier 6 Team

Fixing Tier 6 is about solidarity, equity and dignity. Our work is important. Our pensions should reflect that.



FIX TIER 6 - [How bad is it?](#) [Get involved!!](#) [Watch a Video](#)
[Visit Fixtier6.org](#)- Visit this website to learn more about supporting fixing tier 6.

Longevity- At the start of a member's 11th, 16th, 21st, 26th, and 31st years of credited teaching service in the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS), teachers (excluding TAs) are eligible to receive a longevity salary credit for the designated school years. These credits will become a permanent part of their annual salary.

Credited teaching service will be verified by the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Annual Statement. Please send a copy of your statement to Rachel Enos at renos@oswego.org. You only need to send this statement the first time you qualify for longevity.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): To contact them call 315-470-7447.)

The district provides members with services to help with stress management, family stress, anxiety and panic, workplace issues, communication barriers and more. The service is provided by Help People. It is a free and confidential service! Offices are located in Fulton, Liverpool and Syracuse.

Transportation of Students is prohibited

Personal cars of teachers and staff shall not be used to transport students except in the event of extenuating circumstances and authorized by the administration. ([Board Policy 5720.](#))



Health Insurance: If you are having difficulties with Aetna be sure to reach out to Assured Partners (was ENV) at (315) 641-5848. They can help you with Benefit questions, claims issues, finding providers, etc. You should also inform Amanda Hamilton at the EDC and Carrie Patane of claim issues so they can pass the information on to the members of the Healthcare Committee. IF you have reached out to Assured Partners and you still have concerns, please let us know that too. **Make sure you are using Teledoc and Express Scripts when possible to**

help reduce plan costs and to lower our premiums.

If you would like to order free COVID-19 tests, please visit [COVID.gov](#). Please note that since we are self-insured, ordering tests from Express Scripts impacts our prescription drug plan and will add to the district's healthcare expenses for the year. Any expenses incurred impact our premiums!

Blessings In A Backpack: Making a Difference, One Child at a Time

Blessings In A Backpack provides essential food supplies to over 400 children each week. For just \$114, you can sponsor a child for the entire school year! Our OCTA member, Melissa Russell (OMS), leads our local Blessings Chapter. Here's how you can get involved and make a difference:

Make a Monetary Donation

- Reach out to Michelle McManus at mmcmanu2@oswego.org or Melissa Russell at mrussell@oswego.org to find out how to contribute.

Join Us for Trivia Night

- **Date:** November 8th
- **Time:** 6:30 PM
- **Location:** Elks Club
- **Details:** Teams of up to 8 people, \$30 per person
- [Registration Form](#)

Donate a Raffle Basket for Trivia Night Contact Michelle McManus at mmcmanu2@oswego.org or Melissa Russell at mrussell@oswego.org to contribute a raffle basket. Your support can help ensure that no child goes hungry. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to this important cause!

Donate your cans and bottles -Bring your cans and bottles to Great Lakes Recycling at 159 East Bridge Street or 181 Gardenier Road.

***OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:** [2024-2025 Resource Guide](#)



10/20/24

The stakes of this election

by Randi Weingarten

President, AFT - I have been on a bus most days since Labor Day, encouraging people across our great nation to participate in one of the most consequential elections of our lifetimes. We have held more than 80 events, visited 14 states and logged thousands of miles—and we're not stopping until Election Day. Everywhere I go, I hear the same thing: People want a better life for themselves and their families and a brighter future for the country. The opportunities and freedoms that are the promise of America are at stake in this presidential election, and only one candidate is fighting to realize that promise for all of us.

[Read the rest - CLICK HERE!](#)

THANK YOU to our OCTA Building Leadership 24-25

CER
Ted Beers
Holly Babcock

FPS
Julie Tubolino

KPS
Mary Lynne Maxwell
Hope Mazuroski

FLS
Meghan Harrison
Amy Armet

MIN
Keri Hunter
Stacie Waterhouse-
Roberts

OHS
Gina Iorio
Heather Sugar
Robert Dumas

OMS
Jeff Brown
Clare Donovan

Substitutes
Ed Stacy

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

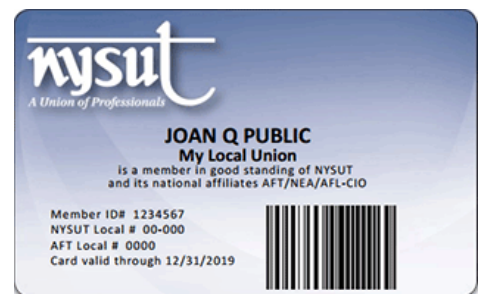
Click on the screenshot of the image below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide! Click on the image below to link to the [website](#)! **Many of your questions can also be found in the [2024-2025 Resource Guide](#).** **The link to this is ALSO posted on our OCTA Webpage!**



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 Burrige **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.

