

OCTA Advocate

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



December 2019

Heartless school board breaks a city's heart; layoffs in Rochester set to take effect Jan. 1

Author: Ned Hoskin

Source: NYSUT Communications

More than 1,000 Rochester teachers, parents and students showed up at Thursday's "Rally to Spare Our Students" and the city school board meeting to demand that the board reject the superintendent's ill-conceived plan for disruptive mid-year cuts.

As dusk fell, local union presidents Adam Urbanski of the Rochester Teachers

Association and Angie Rivera of the Rochester Association of Paraprofessionals, stood on a soapbox in a light snowfall to announce that the projected layoffs had been reduced significantly.

Hundreds of pickets on Broad Street outside the RCSD building howled with hope! But they wanted even more. As Rivera said: "We need zero cuts!"

The good feelings didn't last.

At the end of the night, after hearing testimony from 92 people, all of whom pleaded for a reprieve, the board voted to enact the proposed midyear cuts that NYSUT President Andy Pallotta labeled "a disaster" and "a national disgrace."

While the union and community protest significantly reduced the number of layoffs, the school board approved 155 layoffs, including 109 teachers and 10 paraprofessionals, effective Jan. 1. Initially, the superintendent proposed cutting 287 jobs. [\(READ THE REST, CLICK HERE!\)](#)





Dedicated OHS educator Eileen Sawyer is in this month's OCTA spotlight!

Eileen is a joy to work with. She is kind and patient with both students and colleagues, and goes out of her way to brighten people's day.

She always gives students the benefit of the doubt, and works hard to help them in any way she can. Eileen makes the Oswego High School a better place in which to work!

Congratulations, Eileen! Enjoy the OCTA spotlight ---you earned it!!

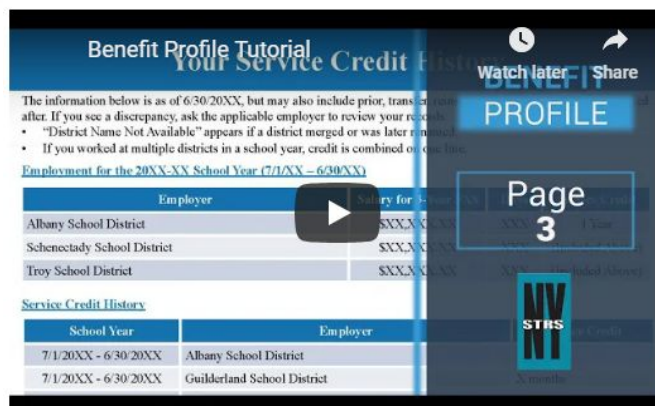


Know an educator in the Oswego City School District who deserves the OCTA Spotlight? Email a picture and brief description to drose@oswego.org. Nominees should be OCTA members in good standing. All nominators and nominees receive a special gift courtesy of the OCTA! Thanks in advance for the support.

[Learn all about your 2019 NYSTRS Benefit Profile!](#)

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.](#)



OCTA MEMBER RESOURCE GUIDE

Did you know that The OCTA Resource Guide provides OCTA members with valuable information with regard to insurance coverage, flexible spending accounts, sick bank, dress code, paycheck code deductions and MUCH, MUCH MORE? Basically, the resource guide is a quick reference for any questions you might have while working in the field of education. You can find the OCTA Resource guide on the homescreen of the OCTA website. [Click here to get to the OCTA website](#) then click on OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE.

OCSD Retirement Delegate Visits Annual New York State Teacher Retirement System Convention

Submitted by OCTA Retirement Delegate Dan Rose (drose@oswego.org)

Early last month, elected OCSD retirement delegate Dan Rose attended the annual NYSTRS convention held at the Saratoga Springs City Center. The two day conference was full of information sessions related to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System. Below, is a list of the sessions offered at this year's conference. Please feel free to browse the session list and follow the links to the presentations! Email drose@oswego.org for further inquiries or to seek more information about all things retirement.



If you couldn't make it to Saratoga, here's a recap:

- Delegates unanimously elected teachers [Sheila Sullivan Buck](#) and [Elizabeth Chetney](#) to the Retirement Board. Buck, of Rush-Henrietta Central Schools, was re-elected to a new three-year term as one of the three active teacher members on the Board. Chetney, of Baldwinsville Central School District, was elected to complete the term of Paul J. Farfaglia, who retired from teaching in June.
- A variety of seminars were offered, with topics ranging from the role of the delegate to the long-term stability of the System.
- Delegates took part in a question-and-answer period with the NYSTRS Board and staff.

Copies of the seminar presentations can be downloaded from the links below. Be sure to also check out the graphic recording of the presentations, which visually capture key points.

- [You've Decided to Retire! What Do You Do Now?](#) ([Graphic Recording](#))
- [Social Security Information](#)
- [Pension Factor and Service Credit: Two Key Components of a Pension Calculation](#) ([Graphic Recording](#))

- [The Potential Liabilities of Loans / Focusing on Your FAS](#)
- [The Role of the Delegate](#) (*Graphic Recording*)
- [Preparing to Live the Retirement Dream](#) (*Graphic Recording*)
- [NYSTRS' Year in Review and the Long-Term Stability of the System](#) (*Graphic Recording*)

You are dedicated to educating students and helping them prepare for the future, and we are dedicated to educating you about your NYSTRS benefits. The more you know, the more informed your retirement-planning decisions will be. [Click here to visit the NYSTRS website and further your knowledge!](#)

All OCTA members can direct retirement questions to drose@oswego.org or aarmet@oswego.org



Attention Special Education Teachers:

The Board of Regents have amended regulation to address limitations in the certification of special education teachers teaching general education curriculum content in grades 7-12 special classes. This change will allow greater flexibility in teacher assignments as district, BOCES and other providers attempt to provide curriculum content instruction for students with disabilities working toward a Regents

diploma.

The amendments allow for the following:

- A statement of continued eligibility (SOCE) for those special education teachers who have used the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) rubric for at least three years to establish their "highly qualified" status in a core academic subject area as required by the federal NCLB in grades 7-12. A SOCE is equivalent to a certificate and is a continuously valid credential.
- A limited certification extension to teach a specific subject in a special class in grades 7-12 for those teachers who have used the HOUSSE for two years. A limited extension has a limited time validity. It is expected that the individual will be working toward completing the requirements for the full certificate extension.

Teachers who hold the following certificates and teach a content subject should apply for the SOCE or limited extension:

- Initial or professional certification in:
 - Students with disabilities (grades 7-12) generalist;

- Students with disabilities (grades 7-12) content specialist;
- Students with disabilities (grades 5-9) generalist;
- Students with disabilities (grades 5-9) content specialist; and
- Permanent certification in special education (grades 7-12).

It is important to note that applications for these certificates must be submitted to SED no later than June 30, 2020, and use of the HOUSSSE must occur before that date.

The NYSUT Fact Sheet on "NYS Certification-Students with Disabilities" can be found at:

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/all-listing/research/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-certification-students-with-disabilities>

Message from Heidi Sweeney, Executive Director of Secondary Education and Personnel

Most folks should have received their new Aetna cards in the mail by now. As you can see from the front, your copays remain the same as they were with UMR and are shown for your information and your providers.

On the back of the card, there is information about the telemedicine benefit, which is a new benefit. More information will be coming out soon about the Teledoc enrollment- likely in January.

In the letter received with the insurance cards, there is information about the Aetna portal, which is very similar to the UMR portal. [Please take a moment to visit the Aetna site and register.](#)

Also of note, we have received some information that the Hannibal Pharmacy will no longer participate in the ESI network, as of January 1st. This has nothing to do with us or our insurance change. Sometimes, networks change or vendors no longer participate and I wanted to assure everyone who might use that pharmacy that this change is not a result of our insurance transition.

I hope everyone enjoys the weekend and gets all their holiday business sorted out! Shop, bake, and decorate with care :)

(Please continue reading about Aetna on the next page. Click on the message to visit the Aetna site and register as a new user.)



This isn't just an ID card – It's the next step in your health journey

We all have health ambitions. They could be as small as taking a daily walk or as big as recovering from surgery. It's our job to help you get there. And that starts with making sure you get the most out of your health plan.



Here's what to do next

- Visit aetna.com and click on "Log In/Register"
- View your plan details
- Access tools to manage your health

If you have questions, just call the phone number on your ID card.

Choose your primary care doctor

Your plan **doesn't require** you to choose a primary care physician (PCP). Even though it isn't required, it's a good idea to select one. That's because a PCP can get to know your health care needs and help you better manage your health. You can find and select a PCP using our online search tool.



SIGN UP FOR OCTA BOWLING EVENT TO BE HELD JANUARY 24!

Dedicated OCTA Member Carol Janice is organizing our OCTA Bowling tournament this year!

Be on the look out for emails regarding this community building event. This Bowling Tournament was a GREAT event last year. We hope you will join us. Please put together your

team of 4 and choose a captain! (Don't forget about the team Name/T-shirt contest!)

Remember... All players must be union members. Subs or other district employees are eligible to play if they worked at least 1 day in your building AND if they are a member of the OCTA. (Yes... CSEA employees and Admin can play too!)

WHEN? The date of this year's OCTA BOWLING EVENT is January 24, 2020.

Please send team names along with player names and captain to Carol Janice - cjanice@oswego.org

A big **THANK YOU** to Billie Jo Peterson and her Unified Art Students for their faux stained glass window work now on display at the OCTA office!





**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You

NEW Endorsed Program

Get ready to Access ... big savings!

NYSUT Member Benefits is pleased to announce the launch of our newest endorsed program -- **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals provided by Access Development!**

This money-saving benefit is available exclusively to NYSUT members and features the nation's largest private discount network.

These deals can be accessed either online or from the palm of your hand through Access Development's MB Deals mobile app. Visit mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com to learn more.

Register your account on the Access website with your NYSUT ID number using the URL above. You will then be able to **enjoy exclusive access to savings of up to 50% on shopping, restaurants, movie tickets & entertainment, travel, oil changes & vehicle maintenance, and much more.**

Have a favorite local business?

One of the best features of the MB Discounts & Deals program is the ability to recommend your favorite local business, restaurant, coffee shop, etc. to potentially join the Access Development network.

Register your account on the Access website by March 31, 2020 to be eligible to win prizes -- visit the Member Benefits website for more information!

Learn more by calling **800-626-8101** or visiting **memberbenefits.nysut.org**.

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

Nov/Dec '19

Fact Sheet 19-17: Teacher Shortage in New York State

Source: NYSUT Research and Educational Services

In the past several years, the national teacher shortage has captured the attention of educators, researchers, policymakers and the media. While estimates regarding the severity of the shortage vary, there is widespread consensus that demand for teachers is certainly on the rise. The U.S. Department of Education has estimated that 1.6 million or approximately 160,000 new teachers per year would be needed nationally between 2012 and 2020. A report from the Learning Policy Institute estimated the number even higher, predicting that schools will need approximately 300,000 new teachers per year by 2020.

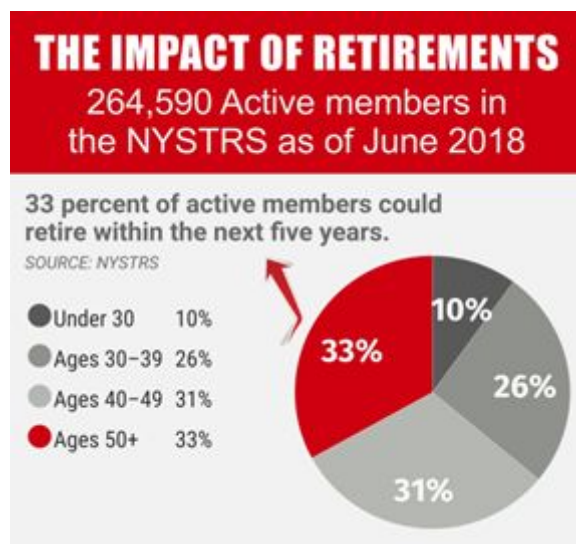
In New York, state officials estimate we will need approximately 180,000 new teachers over the next decade -- or up to 18,000 new teachers annually. The increased demand reflects trends in teacher retirements, expected increases in P-12 enrollments, fewer individuals entering the profession, and rates of teacher attrition. Available data indicates that New York is already experiencing a teacher shortage in a growing number of subject areas and in high poverty schools. Big city and rural districts are reporting severe staffing challenges.

[READ THE REST - CLICK HERE!!!!](#)



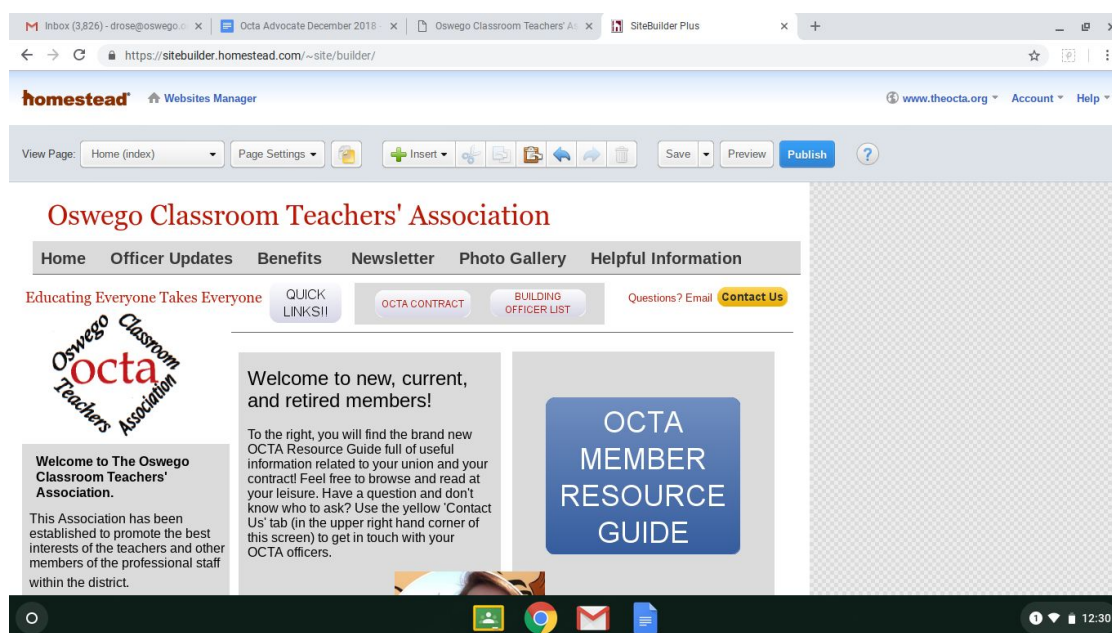
Welcome to NYSUT, our union representing more than 600,000 professionals who work in, or are retired from, New York's schools, colleges and health care facilities. We are college and university faculty and professional staff; classroom teachers, school bus drivers, librarians, custodians, secretaries, cafeteria workers, teaching assistants and teacher aides; nurses and health care technicians. We are one union — working together to remain strong for our members and champion the good work you do every day.

[**READ THE NYSUT MEMBER GUIDE**](#)



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

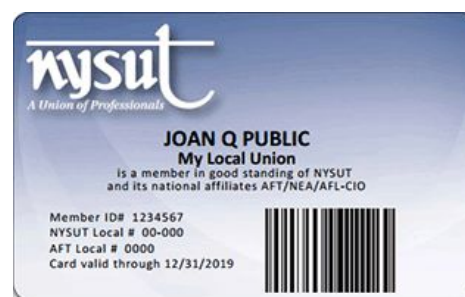
Click on the screenshot of the homepage below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide!



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:** 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.

