

# OCTA Advocate

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



## November 2019

## Nine years without a contract

Despite that, Lawrence local perseveres

By Kara Smith [ksmith@nysutmail.org](mailto:ksmith@nysutmail.org)

When your cause is just, you persevere — no matter how long it takes. For the roughly 300 members of the Lawrence Teachers Association on Long Island, “persevering” has meant working without a contract for the past nine years. Bugged down by a school board demanding draconian givebacks — including eliminating class size limits, requiring all secondary teachers to teach six classes instead of five, and having new hires make 20 percent less — the local has been forced to find new ways to get the board’s attention.



Members of the Lawrence Teachers Association picket outside the home of a school board member. The local has been fighting draconian givebacks in its nine-year fight for a fair contract.

This fall the LTA launched a campaign of twice daily picketing outside the homes of the district’s seven school board members carrying placards that proclaim, in English and Spanish, “no contract for nine years, still working” and “invest in public education.” Board members have been relatively quiet, although they did call the police. “One of the officers was a former student of one of our elementary teachers,” said Lori Skonberg, LTA president. “He gave her a hug.”

[Read the rest of this article in this month’s NYSUT UNITED \(scroll down to page 8\)](#)

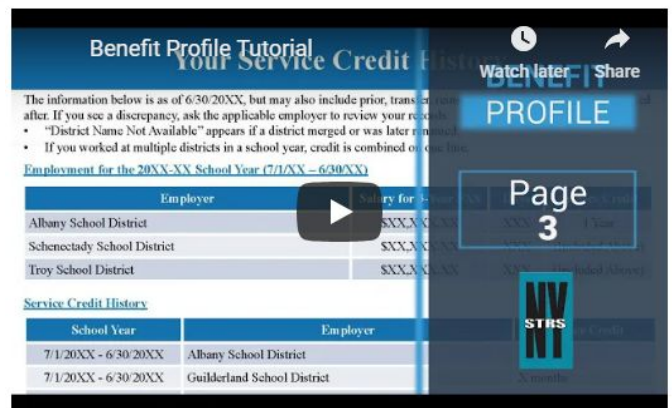
## The OCTA Needs Your Help!!

### Do you know an OCTA member who works hard at what they do?

Someone who always seems to have positive energy? Do you know an OCTA member who deserves to be in the SPOTLIGHT? Then nominate them to be cast in December's OCTA spotlight!!! This new section of the newsletter and website will highlight one (or more) OCTA member(s) per month. Send the candidates name, along with a brief description of what makes them special to [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org). All spotlight nominees and those who nominated them will receive a special gift courtesy of The Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association.

## [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

**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](mailto:drose@oswego.org))

Early this 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](mailto: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:

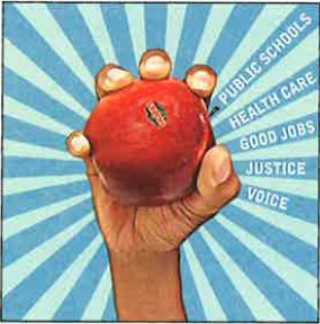
- Delegates unanimously elected teachers [Sheila Sullivan Buck](#) and [Elizabeth Chetney](#) to the Retirement Board. Buck, of Rush-Henrietta Central Schools, was re-elected to a new three-year term as one of the three active teacher members on the Board. Chetney, of Baldwinsville Central School District, 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!](#)

# OUR VOICE, OUR VALUES



# OUR VOTE-COPE

## WHAT IS VOTE-COPE?

Your statewide union has a political fund-raising arm called VOTE-COPE. VOTE-COPE is NYSUT's non-partisan action fund that coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and supports NYSUT-endorsed candidates and campaign committees that are pro-public-education and pro-labor.

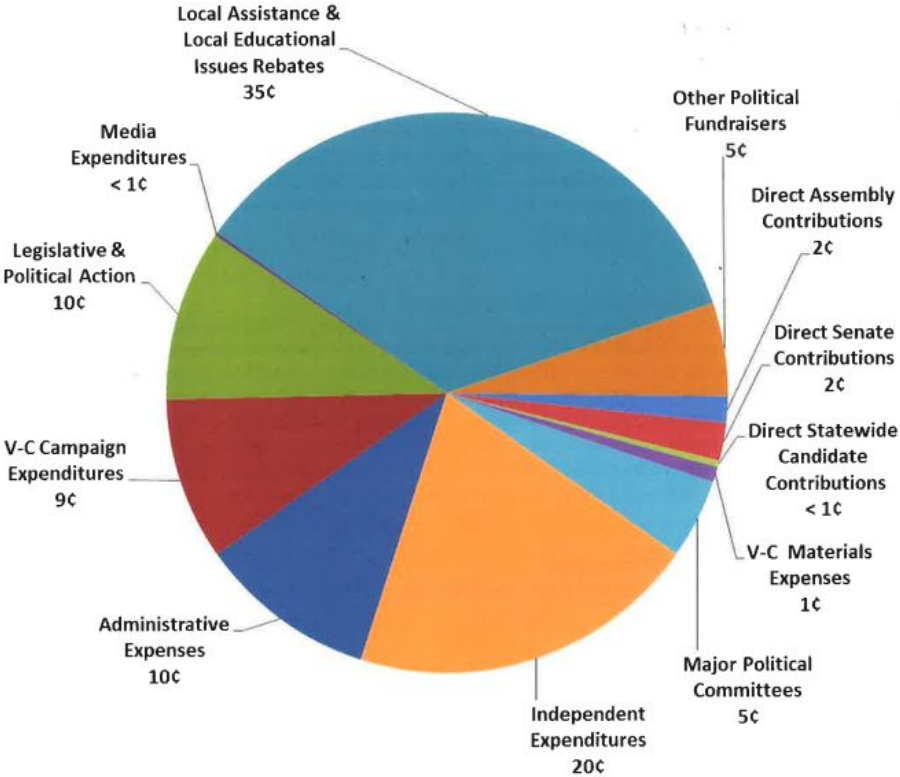
No NYSUT dues dollars are used to support candidates or campaign committees.

No NYSUT dues dollars are used to support candidates or campaign committees. NYSUT sends rebates to local unions based on a percentage (up to 40 percent) of the contributions VOTE-COPE receives from that local union's members. Those rebates can be used in local activities such as school board races and for passage of school budgets.

Jenn Cahill, OCTA’s Vote-Cope coordinator, kicked off this year’s campaign with Presidents & Vice Presidents earlier this month at the OCTA meeting.

OCTA’s campaign will run from November 12 through December 6th; just in time for us to show our thankfulness for all that the union provides. [Learn MORE about VOTE-COPE and political action: CLICK HERE!](#)

## Your VOTE-COPE Dollar at Work



[NYSUT United: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019 \(PDF version\)](#)

Source: NYSUT Communications



Click on the hyperlinks to read a digital copy of [NYSUT UNITED](#) which includes the following articles (plus MANY more!):

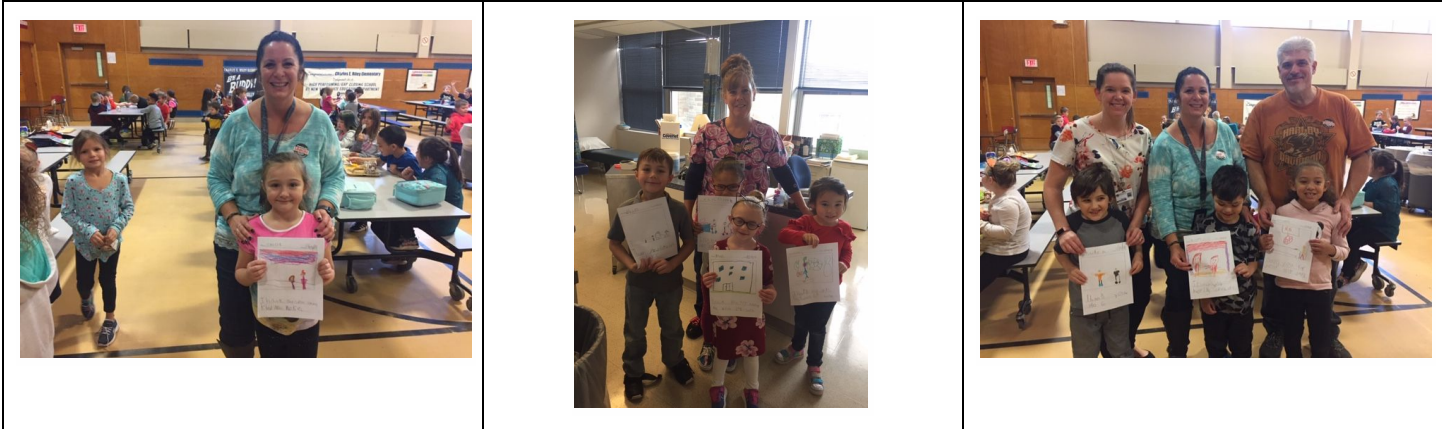
*Student debt crisis NYSUT-backed program aims to help members eliminate debt | 6*

*Learn from the best Education & Learning Trust a rich resource for union members | 13*

*Ending the stigma Union shines a light on the disease of addiction | 16*

**School-Related Professionals Day took place on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2019** and was a day to honor the work of the people who support students, teachers and the care of school buildings.

SRP Recognition Day acknowledges the contributions of School-Related Professionals in helping to educate the whole student. NYSUT's 90,000 SRP members perform a variety of key roles in schools, working as bus drivers, school nurses, custodians, secretaries, food service workers, teaching assistants and aides and in dozens of other job titles. Officially [established as law in 2007](#), SRP Recognition Day falls on the third Tuesday of each November, often during American Education Week. Pictured below: CER students and teachers celebrated SRP day with donuts! First graders made thank you pictures showing how SRPs help on a daily basis! Teachers used SRP day to teach respect and it was a great, authentic learning opportunity for everyone!





## **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](http://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](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org).

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

Nov/Dec '19

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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.

**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!



**[SHOP NOW!](#)**

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## **NEXTGENERATION**

**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.

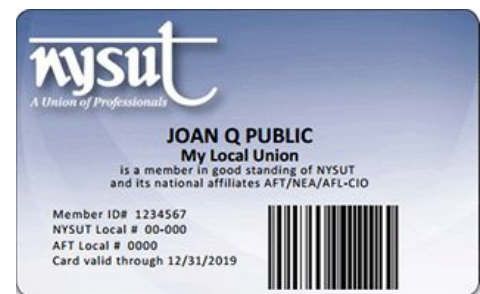
**[READ THE NYSUT MEMBER GUIDE](#)**

**VISIT THE OCTA WEBSITE TODAY!!!!!! Click on the picture link below . .**

## 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.

