

OCTA Advocate

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



OCTOBER 2023

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.

[Welcome message from your OCTA PRESIDENT](#)

[OCTA Members in OCTOBER Spotlight](#)

[SRP Recognition Day: NOVEMBER 21](#)

[Thank you to all who contributed to VOTE COPE](#)

[OCTA MEMBERS gather for NYSTRS presentation](#)

[NYSUT Discounts and Deals for TEACHERS](#)

[OCTA Scholarship Committee](#)

[MARY KAY DISCOUNTS](#)

[OCTA OCTOBER Newsblast](#)

[OCTA Dental REMINDERS!](#)

[VOTE YES ON PROPOSITION 1](#)

[OCTA EXECUTIVE BOARD ATTENDS NYSUT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE](#)

[LINK to OCTA Webpage](#)

Meet your 2022-2023 OCTA Officers!



Carrie Patane
OCTA President



Kim LeRoy
VP Grievance



Jess Burrige
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill
VP Pol. Action



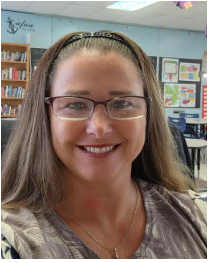
Mike Patane
Treasurer



Michelle McManus
Secretary



Dan Rose
VP Newsletter



Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane

Another school year is upon us, and as we once again sink into the rhythms and cadences of this challenging profession, the world rages around us, churning and frothing forward, always without our approval or acknowledgement. War and the catastrophic violence that often accompanies it, has once again taken center stage, stolen the spotlight, and yet we beat on, like Fitzgerald says, boats against the current, hoping to learn from the past and ride a new swell of knowledge into the future with students in tow.

But the world, ceaselessly, rages on.

First it was a worldwide pandemic, then talk of a stolen election, now [another gruesome war](#) with up-to-the-minute videos and soundbites and live broadcasts, and on the [horizon AI appears to be the next big influencer](#), even causing the [AFTs executive council to adopt a resolution last week](#), taking the first steps toward learning about best practices in AI law and regulation.

As educators, we must recognize and acknowledge where we are and where we are headed, we must consider what our learners are [hearing and seeing through their social media feeds](#), we must adapt and adjust to changing laws and regulations, and we must do all of this with grace and dignity, keeping our focus solely on those learners in front of us.

With all the demands placed upon us, and a steadily growing population of [students with increasingly severe behavior concerns stemming from anxiety and trauma](#), it is not surprising that our profession is having difficulty retaining teachers and teaching assistants and also in hiring quality candidates who will stay in district for the years and decades it takes to create a thriving professional building and district. The [Fix Tier 6 campaign](#) is one way we can give this whole process a big boost forward by granting new hires a chance at a reasonable, dignified retirement.

It is now more important than ever to communicate with one another, to collaborate with colleagues, to use all available teachers and resources (including building staff) at your disposal to help build a cohesive unit that will navigate this sometimes stormy sea with confidence and connectedness. On November 21, we will again [celebrate School Related Professionals Day](#), when we recognize those district-wide staff who help educate, feed and transport students, monitor their health, administer school offices, and maintain school facilities.

We must all work together to provide our students a safe, dependable, nurturing learning environment. We can calm these seas. We can steady the boat.

But we must do it together. All of us.
Thanks for all you do, everyday.
In solidarity,
Carrie

OCTA OCTOBER Spotlight!



Holley D'Angelo (OHS) has been teaching math at Oswego High School for the past twenty one years. She is passionate about helping her students succeed, and builds strong relationships with those that have been in her class. In addition to being an inspiring educator, Holley is also the advisor for student council, leading many events including the Fall and Spring pep rallies. Outside of the classroom, Holley spends time with her husband Kurt, her oldest son Cameron, and her twins Ethan and Giana. She leads an active mom life, and is dedicated to all that she does.

Josh Lerch (OMS) is in his 19th year of teaching, having taught 13 years as an elementary classroom teacher (FPS) and 5 as a reading specialist. Josh says he loves working with kids and helping them find success. I love spending time with my family, working at the pool with aspiring swimmers, and playing volleyball with my friends. Mr. Lerch has two children, Nicholas and Sophia, and broke several records at SUNY Oswego, where he went to college and was a part of the swim team. Josh also played water polo for a number of years at the Empire State



Fitzhugh Park would like to congratulate Mrs. Andrea Dumas as our school's spotlight educator this month! Andrea has been teaching in our district for 22 years and says that she was inspired in the beginning by her fourth grade teacher, who made learning fun and exciting every day.

Mrs. Dumas comes to school ready to make learning both fun and exciting while also developing teacher-student relationships. Her favorite thing about teaching is "knowing that I am helping children be their best self." Andrea also loves when she gets to visit with students she has taught in the past.

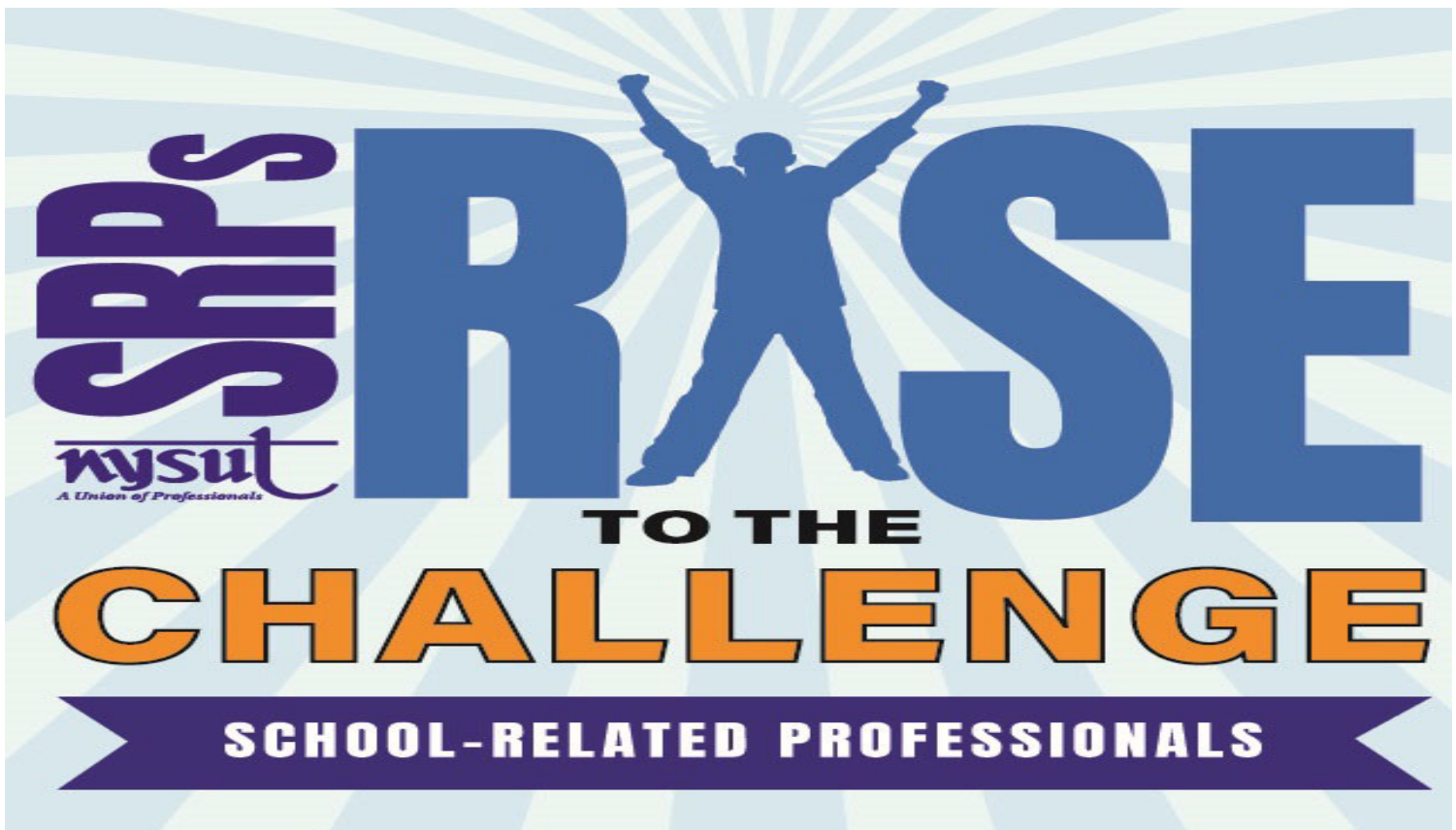
When Andrea is not teaching our younger students, you may find her teaching colleagues during professional development or sitting on various committees including SBIT and our Literacy Curriculum committee.

This is **Ryan Lavner's (CER) 5th year of teaching** elementary PE at Riley. He started as a TA at OMS and OHS during his first years, and has taken inspiration from his mom, his love for working with children, and love for movement. In his free time, Ryan enjoys playing sports, hanging out with friends, and being the commissioner of his fantasy basketball league (where his boys refer to him as "Commish"). Ryan has coached football as an assistant at the varsity level for 6 years and will be starting his 5th year in the girls basketball program as the head JV coach.





Heather Daley went to both Mohawk Valley Community College and finished her bachelor's and Master's degree at SUNY Oswego. Heather did her student teaching placement at Minetto and is so happy to be back and teaching there. She has taught special education at a residential program, preschool, and in the first grade before teaching fifth grade this year. Ms. Daley grew up in Camden, NY with her Mom, Dad, and brother. In her free time, Heather enjoys traveling and snowmobiling. She also enjoys watching the Pittsburgh Steelers play football.



SRPs Rise to the Challenge!

SRP Recognition Day is Nov. 21, 2023, 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.

SRPs Rise to the Challenge, making a difference in our schools, workplaces and communities, every single day.

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.

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.

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.



Join the Fight for Fairness!

Fixing Tier 6 is about justice and dignity in retirement. It's about solidarity and fairness. It's about keeping talented educators in the classroom and recruiting new educators into the profession.

[JOIN THE FIX TIER 6 TEAM!](#)



OCTA Members gather to learn more about the New York State Teachers' Retirement System and benefits available.

Last Thursday, members of the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association gathered in the Middle School library to learn more about the New York State Teachers' Retirement System.

The hour-long session included an overview of pension calculation rules by tier, as well as information pertaining to:

- service credit and prior service claims.
- service milestones and their impact on pension calculation.
- pension payment options.
- death benefits and their continuation into retirement.
- steps to take when filing for retirement.

OCTA offers these informational retirement meetings in the fall and spring of every school year for members of any tier and of any age.

The next seminar will be held in March, 2024.

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](#)

(Pictured right: OCTA Members gather on October 26 for an informational meeting by NYSTRS.)



NYSUT DISCOUNTS



**Hungry?
Need a car rental?
Looking for a good deal on a hotel or flight?**

The NYSUT Member Benefits Discounts & Deals program helps you make every dollar count. Save up to 50% on:

- Restaurant dine-in or take-out
- Groceries and food delivery
- Meal subscription services
- Clothing and shoes
- Oil changes
- Hotels and flights
- Car rentals

MEMBER BENEFITS
nysut
Working to Benefit You

MB Discounts & Deals offers more than 21,000 deals throughout New York State along with hundreds of thousands nationwide. You can even refer your favorite local business (restaurant, coffee shop, workout facility, etc.) to join the network and provide NYSUT members with a special discount. Don't miss out... register your account today!

Member Benefits is proud to endorse MB Discounts & Deals along with dozens of other programs and services that may be able to benefit you and your family members. Take some time to explore our website to find out how we can help you make every dollar count!



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

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Sept/Oct 2022

OCTA Scholarship Committee in search of new members!

Submitted by Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc - OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs

OCTA Scholarship Committee

The OCTA Scholarship Committee is looking for volunteers. Every year, the scholarship committee organizes fundraisers (such as Jeans Week & payroll deduction) which allow the committee to award graduating OHS seniors with valuable scholarships in the spring. If you would like to participate in this year's committee, please email Korrine LaDuc & Meghan Donabella.

Jeans Week - Save the Dates:

October 30th - November 3rd

February 13 - February 17

Thanks!

Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc
OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs



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

OCTA BLAST October 2023

Highlights from our October 2023 OCTA Meeting

***OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:** We have added many new items to the Resource Guide. The forms needed for in-service pay, subbing and time off are all linked. [Resource Guide](#)

FIX TIER 6!! Vote Cope Drive has started. Consider increasing your contribution to \$6 per pay to help Fix Tier 6. (**\$6 for 6; we've got their backs!**) Link to info about the problems with tier 6:

<https://nysut.docsend.com/view/iftanyd3es4kgf4z>

NYSUT Publication: Protecting Yourself- Take a moment to read how to protect yourself.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BaG43Lq1_UvG0dPjJzc0VYDNBXM3NPDC/view

OCTA Scholarship Jeans week: October 30th - November 3rd

Project Save- Starting January 1, 2024

Know your Rights:

Weingarten Rights

All employees are entitled to union representation when there is the potential for the employee to face discipline.

"Can this lead to discipline?"

Weingarten Rights

Rule 1:

The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the meeting. The employee can not be punished for making this request.

Weingarten Rights

Rule 2:

After the employee makes the request, the employer must:

- a) Grant the request and allow the union rep time with the employee before continuing.
- b) Deny the request and end the meeting.
- c) Give the employee the choice to continue alone or end the meeting.

Weingarten Rights

Rule 3:

If the employer denies the request and continues the meeting, they are committing an unfair labor practice and the employee has the right to refuse to answer any questions. The employee may not be disciplined for this refusal.

Know Your Paycheck Deductions:

Check your stub to make sure you are receiving the appropriate deductions for each paycheck

FICA is social security

MEDI is Medicare

FEDERAL is federal tax

STATE is state tax

D/I OCTA is disability insurance

HI10F15% is 10 month family/single health

MED/DENT is your flex spending account

DFBOCTIN is your OCTA Dental Insurance

VISFIND = Vision individual

OCTA28+ is your union dues

OPL is city library contribution

NYSUT = member benefits (Life ins, legal, etc.)

INSREIMB = Insurance Reimbursement (in Dec) for those off step

TRS= money you pay into NYS Teachers Retirement

NYSUT UNITED MAGAZINE



September/October 2023

CONTENTS

4: Sen. John Mannion earns union nod for Congressional bid

6: LAP outreach program empowers local unions

10: NYSUT campaign to salute inspirational educators

14: Educator alert: Field trips are back

21: Sign up now to join Team NYSUT in Making Strides walks

24: Special election notice, ED 45

31: Local Unions in Action; Kudos!



Dental Benefits Reminder!

submitted by OCTA Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt

Reminder please direct all OCTA Dental questions, concerns, changes, COBRA-related items, etc. to the octadentalplan@gmail.com email address NOT to the District! Thank you!

Don't forget to inform OCTA's dental administrator of address and phone number changes (as well as email changes). Without up-to-date contact information, your dental benefits may take longer to process!

Please note that as of September 1st, the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Benefit Fund will have a new address. A separate notification will be sent with the new address, and you will notice this change on all invoices and correspondence you receive from the Benefit Fund. Anything sent to the current P.O. BOX will be forwarded to the new address for a period of 6 months. If you have any questions about this transition, please feel free to reach out. The e-mail address for the plan will remain the same.



OCTA Executive Board attends NYSUT Leadership Conference in Clayton, NY.

Below, OCTA Leaders Carrie Patane, Mike Patane, Dan Rose, Kim LeRoy, Jenn Cahill and Michelle McManus take a moment out of their busy weekend schedule to snap a pic with Melinda Person, new NYSUT president.



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

Home Officer Updates Benefits Newsletter Photo Gallery Helpful Information

Educating Everyone Takes Everyone **QUICK LINKS!!** **OCTA CONTRACT** **BUILDING OFFICER LIST** Questions? Email **Contact Us**

Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association

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.

Welcome to new, current, and retired members!

To the right, you will find the brand new OCTA Resource Guide full of useful information related to your union and your contract! Feel free to browse and read at your leisure. Have a question and don't know who to ask? Use the yellow 'Contact Us' tab (in the upper right hand corner of this screen) to get in touch with your OCTA officers.

OCTA MEMBER RESOURCE GUIDE

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.

