OCTA Advocate

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

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane



Welcome back! As we begin another school year, I hope everyone has had a chance to settle into the rhythm of a new year. The first few weeks can be exciting, exhausting, rewarding, and sometimes all of those things at once! New students, new routines, new goals, and plenty of unexpected challenges remind us once again just how much goes into being an educator.

One of the things I value most about being a part of OCTA is that we are never doing this work alone. Our union is made up of educators who support one another, share ideas and experiences, and work together to make our schools and our profession stronger. Please remember that your OCTA leadership is here when you have a question, need some guidance, or simply need someone in your corner. In fact, each year the OCTA Leadership updates the OCTA Resource guide so you can find the answers to some of our most common questions. We are here to support one another; which reminds me, if you haven't joined our OCTA Facebook Group, that is another place you can reach out to your colleagues after hours! Never hesitate to seek support from your union brothers and sisters!

As we begin the year, I also want to remind everyone to take advantage of the professional learning opportunities available to you. If you are taking an EXTERNAL Professional Development course (*Citi, Teacher Center courses, etc)*, prior approval must be filed through Frontline before taking the course. After completing the course, a payroll invoice and proof of attendance must be submitted within 30 days of completion to receive payment. Members are currently limited to 45 hours of external PD prior to January 1; if funds remain available after that date, the limit will be lifted. This is separate from in-district "INSERVICE" which is offered through the OCSD catalog and only requires the instructor to verify attendance before payment is released. Make sure you know the expectations for the two different types of professional development offerings so you don't lose out on compensation if you fail to meet the 30 day deadline for EXTERNAL PD. (For those taking graduate courses, transcripts must be submitted by October 1st. Members who are not enrolled in a matriculated program may receive approval to take up to six credit hours per year (July 1–June 30) from an accredited institution. If you miss the Fall deadline, you have another opportunity in the Spring Semester to submit your transcripts.)

Thank you for everything you do each day—not only for your students, but for one another and for our community. I hope this school year brings you plenty of moments to celebrate, colleagues to lean on, and opportunities to remember why the work we do matters so much.

Here's to a great school year!
Carrie Patane
OCTA President

Meet OCTA's NEWEST MEMBERS!!



OHS is excited to welcome Kate Hillard to the OCTA family as a Teaching Assistant!

Kate moved to the Oswego area from Florida three years ago and began her time here as a substitute teacher in the Oswego City School District. Before moving to New York, Kate spent five years as a social studies teacher at North Marion Middle School in Florida, where she primarily taught 7th-grade Civics.

Working with children has been an important part of Kate's life for many years. Before becoming a teacher, she held a variety of interesting jobs, including working as a criminal defense paralegal, year-round camp counselor, canoe instructor, high/low ropes instructor, and even a timeshare salesperson!

Outside of school, Kate enjoys spending time with her husband, their three children, and extended family. They love shopping, visiting different beaches, exploring New York's tourist attractions, and discovering new places together. **Welcome to OHS, Kate! We are so happy to have you as part of our school community and wish you a fantastic first year!**

We are excited to **welcome Sofia Proano to OHS** as a new Teaching Assistant!



Sofia comes to education after working as a Medical Assistant, where she assisted with skin cancer removal surgeries. Her path toward education began with the arrival of her daughter, Priscilla. As Sofia discovered how much she loved teaching Priscilla new things, she realized that working with children was a passion she wanted to turn into a career.

Outside of school, Sofia loves spending time with Priscilla and her four-legged family members—her pit bull, Nena, and her two German Shepherds, Nova and Khalessi. She also admits that it is hard to resist a trip to TJ Maxx!

When she isn't at OHS, you may also find Sofia working the beverage cart at Tamarack Golf Club or serving at Kristen's Kitchen at Battle Island.

Welcome to OHS, Sofia! We are thrilled to have you join our school community and hope you have a wonderful school year!

OHS is proud to welcome Samuel Taylor!



Samuel earned his Bachelor's degree in Music Education and Composition from SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music before going on to complete his Master's in Music Education, with a concentration in teaching artistry, at Bowling Green State University. Before joining us at OHS, Samuel taught for four years at Otselic Valley, where he directed instrumental music for grades 4-12.

Inspired by his father and a collection of incredible teachers throughout his life, music has been a constant for Samuel—an inspiration he brings directly into his own teaching. Outside the classroom, he enjoys spending time at the gym, playing video games, and geeking out on the creative-technical side of music by composing, building synths, and coding programs. We are thrilled to have him on our team!



We are so excited to **welcome Caleb Durant to the Fitzhugh Park School** family as our new music teacher!

Mr. Durant is looking forward to making music, learning, creating, and having lots of fun with our students.

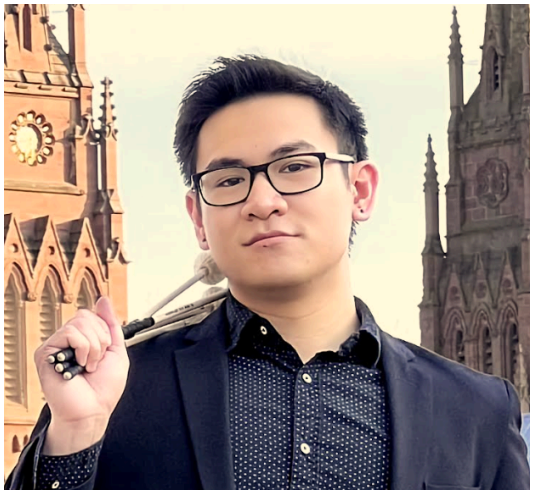
We can't wait to hear the wonderful sounds and see the creativity he brings to our school! Please join us in giving Mr. Durant a big Fitzhugh Park welcome!



Please join us in welcoming our newest members of the **Kingsford Park Elementary** School family! We are excited to welcome Liz Wescott (left), Michelle Pawlenko, and Makendra Dunhum (right) to our school community. We are thrilled to have them join our team and look forward to the energy, experience, and enthusiasm they will bring to Kingsford Park this school year. Welcome, Liz, Michelle, and Makendra—we're so happy to have you with us!



We are excited to welcome Jesse Doan to the Minetto family and congratulate him on being our September OCTA Spotlight! Jesse is beginning his first year as a teacher, serving as the band teacher at Minetto Elementary and the percussion teacher at Oswego Middle School and Oswego High School. He also shares his musical talents as the drumline instructor for the Oswego Marching Buccaneers.



Jesse has always had a passion for music and teaching, and he recently decided to make teaching his profession. What he loves most is seeing the excitement on students faces when that special "lightbulb" moment happens and they make a new connection. He also enjoys those unexpected moments when students see him outside the classroom and stop to say hello!

When Jesse isn't teaching or making music, he enjoys exercising, watching movies, playing video games, and attending live music. Looking ahead, Jesse hopes to still be teaching and making wonderful music with his students 20 years from now. Welcome to the Minetto family, Jesse! We are so happy to have you with us and look forward to the wonderful music, learning, and memories you will create with our students. Congratulations on being our September OCTA Spotlight!

This month, FPS is excited to spotlight Angie Smith!



Angie has been an important part of our school community for 8 years at Fitzhugh Park School, following seven years working at OHS. With 15 years in the district, Angie brings a wealth of experience and a genuine love for supporting our students.

Originally from Oswego, New York, Angie attended Oswego schools herself. She currently serves as a Teaching Assistant at FPS, where she makes a difference in the lives of students each day. When asked what she loves most about her job, Angie shared that she enjoys seeing the kids every day and watching them grow academically, knowing that she has played a part in their success. Her dedication and support help students feel encouraged as they learn and grow throughout the school year.

Outside of school, Angie enjoys baking, going to the races, and camping. And this year is extra special for Angie as she looks forward to becoming a GiGi to her first grandbaby! We are so grateful for all that Angie does for our students and our FPS family. Her caring nature and commitment make her a valued member of our school community.

Please join us in welcoming Dyana Hohle, a new Teaching Assistant at FLS!



Dyana chose to become a TA because she enjoys working with children and being someone they can look up to and trust. She especially enjoys helping students learn, grow, and build confidence in themselves.

For Dyana, the best part of being a Teaching Assistant is building relationships with students and watching them learn and grow. She finds it incredibly rewarding to support a child who may be struggling, encourage them to keep going, and be someone they feel safe and comfortable with at school.

Outside of work, Dyana enjoys being a **dance mom** and spending time shopping whenever she gets the chance! **Welcome to the OCTA family, Dyana! We're excited to have you at FLS and wish you a wonderful school year!**

Please join us in welcoming Jill Watts to Riley Elementary School! Jill grew up in Mexico, New York, and attended school there before continuing her education at **SUNY Oswego** and **Grand Canyon University**.

Jill has been part of the Oswego City School District for approximately eight years and is excited to continue her journey as a **5th Grade ELA and Social Studies Teacher** at Riley. One of her favorite parts of being an educator is watching her students grow, learn, and become more confident in themselves.

Outside of the classroom, Jill enjoys spending time with her family and baking!

Welcome, Jill! We're excited to have you at Riley Elementary and wish you a wonderful school year!





Meet Maren Lutz (Oswego Middle School)

Maren Lutz is excited to begin her journey with the Oswego family! A recent graduate of SUNY Brockport, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Physical Education in May 2026, Maren is currently continuing her education while pursuing her master's degree in Health Education.

Maren's passion for education began at a young age. Growing up in the small community of Pine City, NY, where her graduating class had just 49 students, she was surrounded by educators and saw firsthand the dedication, passion, and positive impact that teachers can have on their students. Her parents, both educators, served as an inspiration and showed her that even when the work is challenging, there is tremendous meaning and joy in helping students grow. Their example inspired Maren to follow in their footsteps and make a similar difference in the lives of future students.

In addition to her work in education, Maren is passionate about coaching. She currently coaches **JV Girls Volleyball** and will also be coaching the **Modified Winter I Volleyball** team. She enjoys helping student-athletes develop their skills while building confidence, teamwork, and a strong sense of community.

Outside of teaching and coaching, Maren enjoys spending time with her parents back home and traveling whenever she gets the opportunity. Maren is thrilled to be part of the Oswego family and looks forward to a fantastic year!

Meet Samantha Austin



Samantha Austin is thrilled to join the **Oswego Middle School** community as a Social Studies teacher! A proud SUNY Oswego alum, Samantha earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the university right here in the Oswego community.

Her journey into education began with student teaching in the Syracuse City School District. Before joining the Oswego Middle School faculty, Samantha spent two years as the building substitute teacher at Oswego High School. This experience gave her the opportunity to work with students across a variety of grade levels and subject areas while building strong relationships with students, staff, and families throughout the district.

Samantha is passionate about Social Studies and looks forward to helping students make connections between the past, the present, and the world around them. She is excited to bring her love of learning, commitment to student success, and strong Oswego roots to her classroom.

Outside of school, Samantha enjoys exploring the great outdoors with her dog, Bart.

She is excited to continue her journey in the Oswego community and looks forward to a wonderful year at OMS!

CELEBRATING OUR RETIREES

Some familiar faces are no longer in our halls, but they remain members of NYSUT and OCTA for life! OCTA extends its sincere congratulations and best wishes to the following members as they begin their retirement journeys. **Thank you for your years of dedication, service, and commitment to the students and families of our district!**

OUR 2026 RETIREES

Name	Name
Peggy Corbett	Cheryl Beck
Barbara Carroll	Stacy Devendorf
Bradley Shannon	Tod Simons
Laura Stevens	Linda Murdock
Amy Purce	Lisa Roman
Heather Sweeting	Benjamin Richardson
Elizabeth Morgia	Sherry Deloff
Karen Fox	Sandra Kunzwiller
Jackie Pfeifer	Christine Oleyourryk
Timothy Wink	

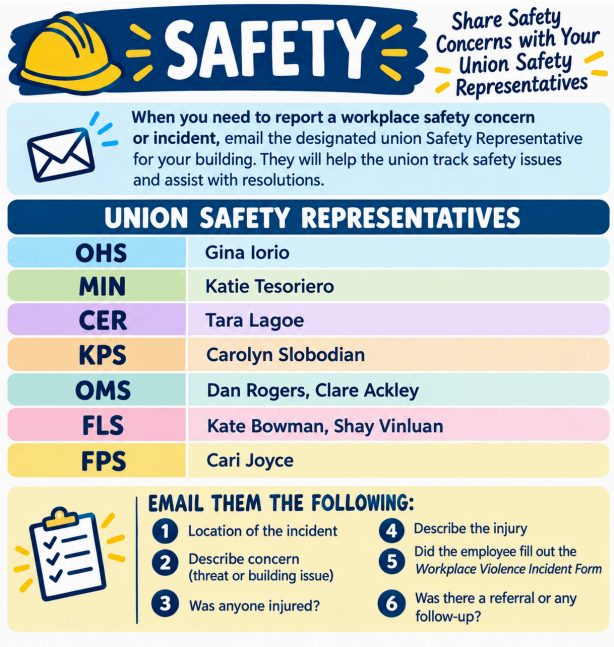
BEST WISHES IN RETIREMENT!

May this next chapter bring our retirees plenty of time for the people, places, and passions that matter most. **Congratulations, and thank you for everything you have given to our school community!**

OCTA Blast September 2026

Workplace Violence: There is a new Workplace Violence Incident Form on Rapid ID. Please be sure to fill this out, anytime you feel that your safety has been impacted. Members still need to report these incidents to their building safety steward.

Diapering and Toileting FAQ provided by NYSUT.



Long Term Disability: Please check your pay stub to see if you have long-term disability coverage. The code on your pay stub is listed as D/I. The cost is around $2 per paycheck, and the district pays 75% of the premium.

If you do not have this coverage and want to add it, please contact Amanda Hamilton.

The sick bank serves as our short-term disability coverage and can provide up to 100 days of coverage if you are enrolled. After those 100 days, long-term disability coverage would be needed, so it is important to check for the D/I code on your pay stub.

Political Action- The Midterm Elections will be here soon. Here is the info from the Oswego County Board of Elections site Tim Allers is running for Will Barclay's seat, and Allissa Ellman is running for Claudia Tenney's seat.

General Election - Tuesday, November 3, 2026

Early Voting - October 24 - November 1 at:

Board of Elections, 74 Bunner St, Oswego, NY 13126

Barclay Courthouse, 1 Broad St, Pulaski, NY 13142

Hours can be found here.

- New Voter Registration Deadline: Saturday, October 24 (register online or at the office, 9 AM - 5 PM)
- Change of Address Deadline: Friday, October 30
- Vote by Mail Application Deadline for Ballot to be Issued through the Mail: October 24

NYSUT Endorsements

Insurance: If you are having difficulties with MVP be sure to reach out to GALLAGHER *(WAS Assured Partners/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 GIA Telemed, ask for GENERIC RX, and use Express Scripts MAIL ORDER when possible to help reduce plan costs and to lower our premiums. OUR USAGE IS UP BY A LOT THIS YEAR and our premiums next year reflect our costs from this year.



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.

Member Benefits Teacher Discounts: Click on this **link** to view teacher discounts.

OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE: **2026-2027 OCTA Resource Guide**

NYSUT News: Want to keep up to date on all NYSUT related conversations? Join the MAC (Member Action Center) Take action!!

Good news! Your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Group Legal Service Plan has been renewed. Please refer to this reference sheet and the attached Certificate of Coverage for details.

Contact for ALL Legal Questions & Referrals - Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C.
- **Main Phone Number:** 631-231-1450
- **Toll-Free (NY) Phone Number:** 800-832-5182
- **Outside NY & After-Hours Phone Number:** 800-292-8063

Popular Benefits
- Free letter writing, phone consultations & document review
- Legal Security Package for your estate planning documents (see below)
- Referral attorney rate: $285/hour or 25% off their standard hourly rate (whichever is lower)
- Two (2) one-hour consultations per renewal period (restrictions apply; see Certificate of Coverage)

How to Use Your Plan
- Contact the National Legal Office.
- Provide your **NYSUT ID Number** & a brief explanation of your legal matter.
- Get connected with a staff attorney or referral attorney depending on your matter.

Legal Security Package (LSP)
- Three (3) packages per two-year renewal period
- Contains forms to prepare your Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Power of Attorney
- Covers spouse, domestic partner, parents, grandparents & in-laws
- Download at mb-nysut.org/LegalLSP or call the National Legal Office or NYSUT Member Benefits

Elder Law Services
- 20% discount on Elder Law Attorney fees
- Covers spouse, domestic partner, parents, grandparents & in-laws
- Refer to Certificate of Coverage for details

New members (or anyone who hasn't completed it yet or needs to update their email or name) please take a moment to fill out the **OCTA Contact Form**.

Know Your Paycheck Deductions-
Document from Meghan Wilson
Check your stub to make sure you are receiving the appropriate deductions for each paycheck:

FICA is social security
MED/DENT is your flex spending account
MEDI is Medicare
DFBOCTIN is your OCTA Dental Insurance
FEDERAL is federal tax
VISFIND = Vision individual
STATE is state tax
OCTA28+ is your union dues
D/I OCTA is disability insurance
OPL is city library contribution
HI10F15% is 10 month family/single health **NYSUT** = member benefits (Life ins, legal, etc.)
INSREIMB = Insurance Reimbursement (in Dec) for those off step
TRS= money you pay into NYS Teachers Retirement

Sick Time/ Personal Time/ Approved Absences
AA= Approved Absence
DO Med= Dock Day for medical reasons
DO UNAUTHORIZED= Dock Day without medical reasons
LV=
Personal= You receive 5 personal days per year
Sick= You receive 12 sick days per year





SRP Recognition Day: Our Work Makes Schools Run

SRP Recognition Day is Nov. 17, 2026, 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.

OCTA WELCOMES NEW DENTAL ADMINISTRATORS!

It is with great enthusiasm that the OCTA Dental Board welcomes OCTA retiree Michele Lloyd & her husband David Lloyd as our new Dental Plan Administrators! Michele and David will Co-Manage the plan (and are also members of the plan).

Michele and David officially take over the reins tomorrow, so as of 8/18/26, they will be your points of contact. **They have taken over the email address at octadentalplan@gmail.com.** If you saved this email address in your contacts it may still show another name associated with the email address, but Lindsay no longer has access to that google account. You will need to update your own personal contact list to change any names associated with the gmail account.

Please be patient as they navigate the new operating system/webpages and get everything set-up. Michele and David will be a GREAT asset to our dental plan and are already thinking ahead about ways they can improve the plan. We hope you are as excited to welcome Michele and David as our plan administrators as we are. They will do a phenomenal job!

A Special Thank YOU!

The OCTA would like to recognize something that makes us incredibly proud of our school community. Our OCSD educators and families continue to show tremendous generosity and compassion for the children and families in Oswego. Recently, Blessings in a Backpack – Oswego received an incredible $26,777 donation through 7 Brew's “Caffeine With A Cause” fundraiser. That donation represents more than half of the organization's annual budget and will make a tremendous difference for local children and families.

2026 - 2027 Dues Withholdings for OCTA



As per the ratified teachers' contract, please be advised that full dues for each active member (defined as earning $38,000 and above) of the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association should be $903.32 for the 2026-27 school year. Please have $43.02withheld for each of the 21 paychecks with a limit of $903.32. Three-quarters dues payers (defined as having a salary in the range of $28,500 - $37,999) pay $26.39 for each of the 21 paychecks with a limit of $554.16. Half-time dues members (defined as having a salary of $19,000 - $28,499) should have a new limit of $451.66 with a per check amount of $21.51. One-quarter dues members (defined as having a salary of $9,500 - 18,999$) should have a new limit of $225.83 with a per check amount of $10.75. One-eighth dues members (defined as having a salary of less than $9,500 should have a new limit of $112.92 with a per check amount of $5.38 for the 21 pay periods.

The dues deduction for members of the Per Diem Substitute Unit (including teachers of homebound students and tutors in the ESL Program) of the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association should be 1% per calendar day of work. (Long term subs will be adjusted and fall into one of the categories above.)

**Notice the salary amount for each category has a new range.
Full Dues: $38,000+
¾ Dues: $28,500 - $37,999
Half Dues : $19,000 - $28,499
Quarter Dues: $9,500 - $18,999
1/8 Dues: Less than $9,500

Thank you for your continued cooperation and assistance.
Sincerely,

Michael M. Patane,
OCTA Treasurer
Oswego Middle School

Filing for Protection ONLY! I want to pass this along to our members as a precaution.

Should a member plan to go in for surgery or any medical procedure that may involve the risk of life, or should a member come down with a severe illness, it is important for the member to fill out the attached form prior to any procedures taking place.

Filing for protection with the Teachers' Retirement System will increase the death benefit to the member's beneficiary. It is imperative to have a plan in place should we face the frightening prospect of a worst-case scenario. (Note - you cannot simply file for "blanket" protection without a diagnosis indicating your life could be in jeopardy.) Print and save a blank form and the instructions where you will have access to it, should you ever need it. ****NOTE - You will need to have enough time to have this notarized PRIOR to sending it in.** The OCTA secretary is required to be a notary - so you can ask Michelle McManus to help you or there are other members who are likely available as well. You can find notaries in a number of places like banks or hospitals too.

What is FILING FOR PROTECTION?

Filing for protection is a benefit administered by the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) and allows a vested member (with ten or more years of service) to protect him/herself by providing beneficiaries with payment should you unexpectedly pass. This benefit is available if you are diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening medical condition or you are having surgery or treatment for a medical condition. By filing for protection, your beneficiary is entitled to the largest non-declining lump sum payment found on your benefit profile. This payout is considerably more than the typical in-service death benefit of three times your salary you would receive if you passed while still working.



Click on the screenshot to learn more about filing for 'protection only.'

Support VOTE-COPE: Our Voice, Our Future

The Oswego Classroom Teachers Association is preparing for our annual **VOTE-COPE drive**, and this year our goal is simple: **raise as much as possible to support this valiant cause.**

For those who may not be familiar, **VOTE-COPE** is the statewide political fundraising arm of **NYSUT**. It is a **non-partisan action fund** that coordinates the voluntary contributions of union members across New York State. These contributions directly support **NYSUT-endorsed candidates and campaign committees that fight for pro-public-education and pro-labor policies.**

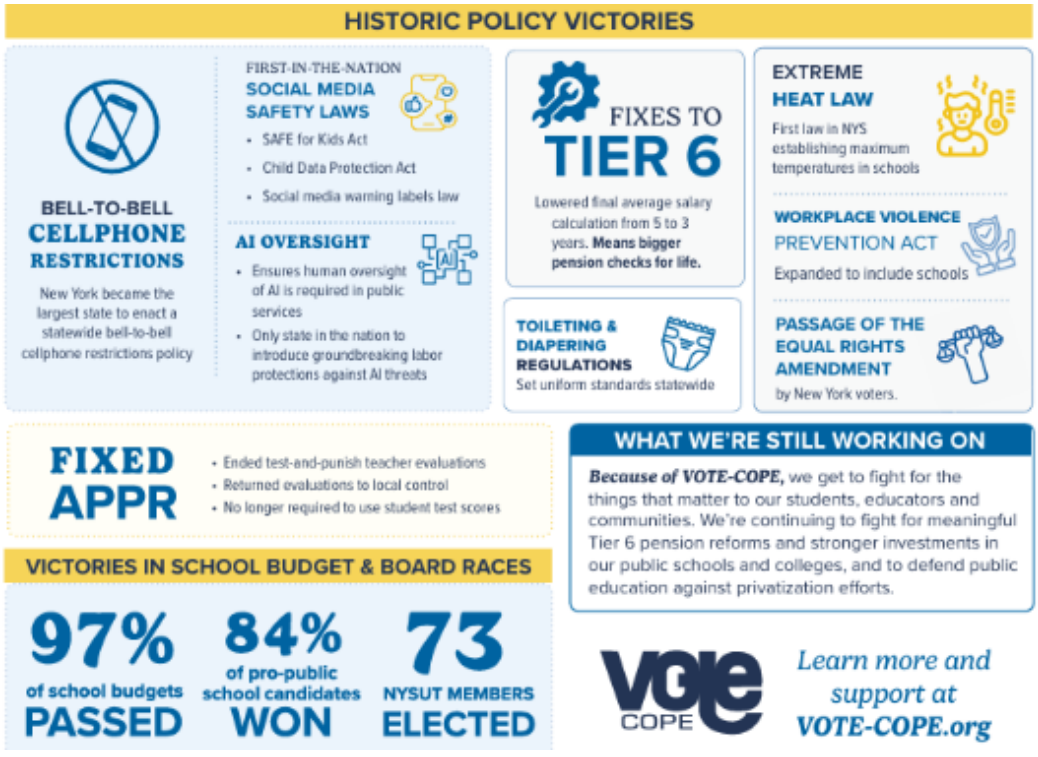
Your donations to VOTE-COPE make a difference:

- They help elect lawmakers who stand with educators, students, and working families.
- They strengthen our voice in Albany and Washington.
- They protect the rights, benefits, and working conditions we have fought hard to secure.

This year's VOTE-COPE drive is especially important. With critical decisions ahead on funding, contracts, and education policy, we need to ensure that our collective voice is heard loud and clear. **Every contribution, no matter the size, helps.**

How you can help:

- Consider increasing your payroll deduction to VOTE-COPE.
- Encourage colleagues to participate in the drive.
- Remember: every dollar adds up to stronger advocacy for our profession.



News from PAYROLL

Good morning everyone and welcome back to our 10 month employees.

Deductions: PLEASE look at your deductions to make sure everything is there. If you signed up for family insurance but only paying for individual, you need to tell us. There are hundreds of you and I have to go in 1 by 1 go in and make updates and changes and your eyes as my backup is greatly appreciated. If you're missing a deduction, I need to know. If you have deductions that fall into the OTHER category, please send me an email and I'll let you know what that covers.

Time: With sick, personal, and vacation time being printed on checks, I receive many calls but I cannot help you. Questions regarding your time, you must speak directly with your timekeeper. The system prints what they enter onto your check, I do not have access. There is also a slight delay with that so if it seems off, you really should wait until your next check to be sure.

Extra Comp./PD/Inservice: Please pay attention to what form you are completing, make sure all the boxes are filled in and that the dates are correct. I receive 300+ forms every pay cycle and need to start denying ones that are not completed or incorrect. For extra comp. (rates and codes are on the shared drive) you need to complete the Payroll Invoice Form. This one requires a budget code. For inservice and PD, please complete the PD payroll invoice form. That one will let you leave the budget code blank as it is assigned by the curriculum office. All inservice and PD needs to go through their office, not your principal.

21 vs. 26 pays: For the 9/26 payroll, salaried 10 month employees will have 21 pays or 26 pays printed on your checks. I'll send a reminder at that time, but please make sure you have the correct code so I can catch anyone that was missed. Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. There are many of you, only 1 of me, and paying attention to this information truly helps.

Meghan Wilson (Senior Payroll Clerk)
Extension 7015 (315-341-2005)

Retirement Seminar (New York State Teachers Retirement System)

The **Oswego Classroom Teachers Association (OCTA)** is excited to host a **New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) Benefits Presentation** on **Thursday, November 12, from 5:00–6:15 PM at the OCTA Office**, with a NEW TEACHER Q & A period taking place right before the main event from 4:00 - 4:45!

This is a valuable opportunity to hear directly from a **real NYSTRS representative**, who will cover key topics that every teacher should know, including:

- An overview of pension calculation rules by tier.
- How to ensure you receive all eligible service credit.
- Important service milestones and how they affect your pension.
- Pension payment options available to you.
- Death benefits and their continuation into retirement.
- The steps needed to file for retirement.

The session will last a little over an hour and will include time for **general questions** in this group setting. (For more specific or personal questions, members are encouraged to schedule an individual benefits consultation or call NYSTRS directly at **(800) 348-7298**.)

Food and drink will be provided courtesy of OCTA—come for the valuable information and stay for the refreshments.

📩 **Sign up now!** EMAIL **Dan Rose (drose@oswego.org)** if you plan to attend this in-person seminar.

NYSTRS Announces Fall 2026 PREP Seminar Schedule

Many retirees tell us they wish they began focusing on financial and retirement planning much earlier in their lives. NYSTRS designed the Pension & Retirement Education Program (PREP) to help active members take a proactive approach to retirement planning. Each half-day session covers NYSTRS benefits, financial planning, Social Security, estate planning and the retirement process.

The fall 2026 PREP Seminar schedule, as well as reservation and attendance information, are available on the Retirement Planning/Pension & Retirement Education Program page at nystrs.org. The information also appears on the second page of this Delegate News.

Reservation and Attendance Information

- **Make a reservation** online in MyNYSTRS at nystrs.org or call 800-348-7298, ext. 6180 during our business hours.
- **Sessions run from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Registration begins at 8 a.m.
- **Slots fill quickly,** so we recommend making a reservation early.
- **Bring your latest *Benefit Profile*** with you (you can print it from MyNYSTRS).
- **Not going to attend?** Cancel through MyNYSTRS or by phone so others may register.

The PREP seminar is offered throughout the year. Reservations open in mid-September (fall schedule), mid-December (winter/spring), and mid-May (summer). Encourage members to check nystrs.org/prep often for the latest seminar schedule.

The PREP seminar is not intended for individual benefits counseling. To schedule a one-on-one consultation, members should visit the Retirement Planning/Benefits Consultations page of nystrs.org.

Check out the OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE!

Oswego Classroom Teachers Association

octa

Resource Guide 26-27

26-27 Resource Guide	24-28 OCTA Contract	OCTA Facebook Group

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION HERE

To send a request to join the OCTA Facebook Group, use the QR code or search OCTA
You must be a member of OCTA to join the group. (Be sure to answer the required Qs.)

Keep up-to-date on union news!

NYSUT UNITED

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5: Educators testify on the future of Foundation Aid

9: Celebrate Retiree Recognition Day

13: Getting to know ... Renee Shea, SRPs of Pine Plains

18: NYSUT librarians fight back against attempts to silence diverse voices

21: Rochester TA Savvy Sewers fight human trafficking one dress at a time

23: ACS VOICES seeks to improve cancer outcomes for Black women

NYSUT members are calling for a return to politics where compromise and healthy debate are valued. Because they know

COMMON GROUND OVER CHAOS

is how we mend a country, build strength, and provide solutions for our student and communities.

OCTA Scholarship Committee Seeking Members

The **OCTA Scholarship Committee** is looking for new members to join this year's team!

Each year, the committee works to support graduating Oswego High School seniors by organizing fundraisers that help make valuable scholarships possible. Fundraising efforts such as **Jeans Week and payroll deduction** provide the resources needed to award scholarships to deserving OHS seniors each spring.

If you are interested in getting involved, we would love to have you join us! Committee members help organize fundraising efforts and play an important role in supporting our students and their future goals.

Interested in joining? Please reach out to **Korrine LaDuc or Meghan Donabella** for more information.

Jeans Week — Save the Dates!

Mark your calendars for our two Jeans Week fundraisers this school year:

October 26–30
February 8–12

Thank you for helping the OCTA Scholarship Committee continue its tradition of supporting our graduating seniors!

OCTA CLASSIFIEDS: Buy • Sell • Swap • Connect

We are excited to share the OCTA Want Ads, a dedicated forum designed for our union colleagues to exchange goods and services. Whether you are offering furniture, apparel, yard tools, automobiles, real estate, or other essentials, this platform lets you reach out directly across our OCTA family.

Ready to post an item? Simply forward a summary, cost, picture, and your chosen contact details directly to the OCTA Advocate team (drose@oswego.org).

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<td>
Sport Tek Dry Zone Raglan Polo: Adult Medium. NEVER WORN! $25. Venmo @KimLeRoy25</td>
<td>
Port Authority Digital Stripe Fleece Jacket: Men’s Medium. NEVER WORN! $60. Venmo @KimLeRoy25</td>
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Have you visited the OCTA website yet? What are you waiting for!!??

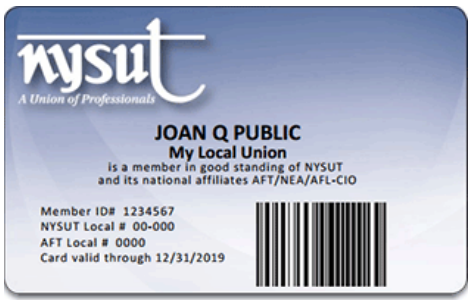
Click on this link to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide! Click on the image below to link to the website!



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 Burridge **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.