

OCTA Advocate

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



May 2024

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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

At one time or another, you're likely to require some form of legal advice or assistance. Whether it's preparing a Will, creating a Trust, refinancing a mortgage, or even changing your name, you'll most likely require the services of a legal professional along the way.

At this time, we have an opportunity to provide all OCTA members with a [Legal Service Plan](#) for a significantly reduced rate if we enroll as a group. It is a comprehension plan which allows participants to create and store important legal documents for **FREE**, including a Simple Will, a Power of Attorney, a Living Will and Health Care Proxy. This legal plan also offers discounted legal advice through a

nationwide network of licensed, referral attorneys with regard to member issues like identity theft, debt consolidation, elder-care, mortgage foreclosure, and personal injury cases.

For a member to enroll in this plan on their own through NYSUT Member Benefits, the cost would be \$80-\$85 a per year, which is a fantastic rate. However, **OCTA is gifting this membership to ALL of our members as our end of the year gift! Enrollment will begin in SEPTEMBER (but if someone needs this service sooner, let us know as they may be able to help you sooner.)**

Next year, a group of legal professionals will set up dates and times to visit each building for IN-BUILDING WILL DAYS! All OCTA members will be able meet with attorneys at their school to set up Wills, Power of Attorney documents and Health Care Proxies.

SAVE THE DATE: Plan to attend an informational Google Meet with one of the lawyers from the legal plan on Mon, **June 17th at either **8 am, 2:30 pm, or 3:45 pm** to learn all the benefits of this program.**

Until then, take some time to look the plan over by clicking the links below. I truly believe this will be a useful and valuable resource to our membership.

In solidarity,

Carrie

Here is a link to download the full brochure: [Brochure](#)

Here is a link to the NYSUT Member Benefits site: [Webpage](#)

Plan Features: [Webpage](#)

PS: If you haven't already done so, please fill out the **OCTA personal contact Google Form** to provide the OCTA leadership with **YOUR SHIRT SIZE** and any personal contact information we can use to connect with you outside of school hours if we need to share information about upcoming contract negotiations, or other organizing efforts that cannot be sent through school email.

OCTA also shares local and NYSUT communication through our **Facebook group**. Please join if you are on the FB platform!

Congratulations to our most recent OCTA Spotlight Recipients!



Ms. Stephanie Krapf (CER) is originally from Oswego and went to school at Niagara University for her two bachelor's degrees in childhood and special education before acquiring her master's degree in literacy from SUNY Oswego. Stephanie has been with the Oswego City School District for 12 years now and is currently split between KPS and CER teaching special education. About education, Stephanie says that being able to help change a student's mindset from *I can't do it* to *I can't do it yet* has always been her goal. She enjoys helping students to realize that no matter what level they are at, their hard work will always pay off. Ms. Krapf loves spending time with her own 2 children outside of school and is grateful and thankful for the teaching experiences she has had so far.

Rodolfo Pena, a teacher at Oswego Middle School (OMS), is closing in on his third full year of teaching. His journey began with student teaching at the Oswego Middle School, where he found a deep appreciation for the supportive faculty, colleagues and students. Prior to being full-time at OMS, Rodolfo worked during the summer as a Teaching Assistant in Baldwin, NY, and through OCM Boces. Outside the classroom, he enjoys running and biking. Rodolfo enjoys seeing students' growth and academic progress throughout the year in Spanish. He says he is very fortunate to be able to work and learn alongside so many great people at OMS, and is excited for the opportunities that lie ahead.

This month, **Fitzhugh Park School** would like to honor **Mrs. Michelle Ross** as our OCTA Spotlight Member! Mrs. Ross has spent 11 years in our district as a Speech-Language Pathologist and students, parents and staff alike appreciate her knowledge and skill-set. Originally interested in pursuing a career in the medical field, her student teaching and clinical experiences introduced her to a love for the preschool population's speech needs. Mrs. Ross has served as an SLP at a non-profit agency in Rochester and the Oswego County BOCES before



coming to our district and we couldn't be more thrilled to have her here with us at FPS! When asked what she loves most about her career and Michelle answered, *"I love that being an SLP allows me to work across the lifespan. I love the excitement and honesty that Kindergarten students bring with them everyday and I love to see the higher level language skills and confidence develop in our older students. The connections made with students are the best part of my school day!"* Thank you for all you do, Mrs. Ross!



Brian Greene (OHS) has been with the OCSD since 2001. He is a very committed Physical Education teacher and well respected by his peers and students. On any given day you can find Brian happily working with students regardless of their ability or skill. He also stays busy coaching all 4 sports' seasons at both the JV and Varsity levels. Brian has coached his entire teaching career. He works with students from ages 7th grade to 12th grade. Brian is heavily involved in the OCSD community and deserves to be recognized for his dedication to the students of the OCSD.

Robin Tryon (KPS) has been teaching 19 years (16 years in Kindergarten, 1 year in 1st grade, 2 years in 2nd grade) as a classroom teacher/ELL. As for her inspiration for teaching, Robin says, "Having a purpose each day gets me out of bed. My purpose is to reach kids both academically and personally. I love to make connections with kids that last long after they leave my classroom. If I am passionate about learning something, it is contagious, and I see that love of learning in my students." Outside of school, Robin loves riding motorcycles with her husband, Dan, and adventuring to see where those wheels take them. Robin has been married for 34 years, has 2 children (ages 25 and 27) and loves planting and watching things grow. Traveling to Ireland and Scotland last year makes her want to see more countries. Her goal in retirement is to see the National Parks and to get



there via motorcycle and camp along the way! Thank you for all you do for your KPS school and community, Robin!



Karen Venditte (Minetto) teaches Kindergarten and Special Education and has been in education for 22 years, 20 of those with the OCSD. She loves seeing inclusion done right and watching kids grow when they get what they need. Outside of school, Karen likes to travel, hike and read. About her union, Karen says that “Everybody needs someone to have their back,” and that she is glad the OCTA is there for her.

Sandy Kunzwiler (Minetto) has worked in grades K-6 for all 20 years of her teaching career with the Oswego City School District.

About teaching, Sandy says that “The kids inspire me the most. I love helping kids of all ages. The best part is seeing them after they have been in my class and them remembering me by name!” Sandy says that her family is her other interest and that she has a super husband and 3 amazing sons! Sandy is thankful for her union, the benefits they fight for, If you need anything the union is a great place to stand with you and have your back, always striving to get us more benefits.



DENTAL OPEN ENROLLMENT INFO!

Open Enrollment for dental will take place from May 13th to May 31st! If a member needs to enroll or make changes, this is the time to do it! Please contact OCTA Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt octadentalplan@gmail.com

Also, any prospective retirees who want dental in retirement need to enroll during open enrollment to ensure that there is no lapse in benefit-- Please contact Lindsay by emailing her octadentalplan@gmail.com.

New rates for next year (2024 - 2025):

Individual: \$2.63 per pay period

Member+1: \$28.88 per pay period

Two In Unit: \$28.88 per pay period

Family: \$57.75 per pay period

Members retiring shortly should reach out if they want to continue dental coverage in retirement.

Just a friendly reminder: **Please take note of the Plan language that stipulates enrollees are entitled to two cleanings/preventative visits per 12-month period**, and Visit A and Visit C of such visits need to be scheduled a minimum of **12-months and one day from each other**—For example, if you went to the provider on June 20, 2023 (Visit A), and your next visit was on December 23, 2023 (Visit B), your next visit would need to be scheduled on June 21, 2023 (Visit C) or later in order to be covered.

Providers always try to do their best to properly schedule and space appointments, but ultimately the responsibility rests on members to ensure that their appointments are properly spaced based upon the Plan language as described above.

VOLLEYBALL INFO!

Submitted by Julie Tubolino (jtubolin@oswego.org)

Save the date Friday, June 21, 2024 will be the annual volleyball tournament.



ANYONE can play - fill out the survey by June 7

May 13th- Any players can respond to the email following this one. If you want to play let me or your team captain know!

Thursday May 30th - Team Captains for each building ~ e-mail Julie Tubolino! Start building your roster!

Friday, June 7nd - Send in Team Names and Colors! Please send along team Rosters too if you have them.

Friday, June 14th: Team Captains Meeting @Cheapseats. TEAM ROSTER OFFICIAL DEADLINE!

Friday, June 21st: Tournament starting around 3:15-?

We will be honoring our RETIREES at our Volleyball Tournament!

We are looking for volunteers to be raffle helpers.

Please start setting up baskets for each building...any theme you want! Consider a full building fundraiser to help pay for the raffle basket and/or to contribute to the winning team's charity!

Thank you to this year's OCTA RETIREES!!


NAME	BLDG.	POSITION
Kathleen Audlin	OHS	Teaching Assistant
Jamie Brancato	FPS	Literacy/Reading Teacher
Catherine Celeste	OMS	Science Teacher
Marie Clark	CER	Library Media Specialist
Jacqueline Clarke	MIN	Literacy Specialist
Lisa Edwards	FLS	Teaching Assistant
Kathleen Forger	FPS	Teaching Assistant
Margaret (Peg) Holt	OMS	Special Ed Teacher
Joseph Houppert	OHS	Science Teacher
Carole Lloyd	OMS	Math Teacher
Christopher Mangano	OHS	Technology Teacher
Catherine Pepper	MIN	Teaching Assistant
Leanne Perry	MIN	Elementary Teacher
Sarah Rector	OMS	Health Teacher
Susan Roik	OMS	Math Teacher
Terri Cullen Stacy	CER	Elementary Teacher
Gretchen Coakley	KPS	Elementary Teacher

Filling out incident reports in the nurse's office?

Incident reports should be completed **ANY TIME** you experience an injury OR experience violent behaviors which impact you (hit accidentally or intentionally etc.) even if you are not seriously injured. This is not only to document the event and behavior, but could help protect you as well. Additionally, the school district tracks incident reports to help report data for the Workplace Violence Act. School tool notes are not tracked for this.

OCTA BLAST May 2024*Highlights from our May2024 OCTA Meeting*

NYSUT Legal Plan: OCTA has purchased the NYSUT Legal Plan for all OCTA members which will be implemented in the 2024-2025 school year. Virtual presentations regarding the benefits of this plan will take place June 17th at 8:00, 2:30 and 3:45. Invites coming soon. Read about the benefits now.

 [Group Legal Service Plan](#)

Dues for 24-25: OCTA dues are frozen for next year. There will be a SLIGHT increase in NYSUT dues.

Adopt- A- Highway: Adopt- A- Highway will take place Thursday, June 6th at 4:15. We will meet in the large high school parking lot on the Utica Street side. If you would like to bring your own gloves you can. Gloves will be provided if you do not have your own.

NYS Mandated Reporter Training - REQUIRED for ALL members by April 2025. As of right now we are not sure if the district will be offering the training, so if you'd like to do this over the summer click on the fact sheet and find links to the training. [NYS Mandated Reporter Training](#)

VOTE COPE: Congratulations to all OCTA Members. We earned the Dan Sanders award for our contributions to Vote COPE this year. The push for Tier 6 is going strong! Next year think about contributing \$6 for Tier 6.

Contact Information Needed: Please fill out this [form](#) **ASAP** (include your **shirt size**)

Negotiations: We met with the district on May 6th and shared proposals. The information was brought back to the large team on May 20th. The next meeting with the district is on June 3rd.

Health and Vision Insurance: Don't forget to sign up for Health and Vision Insurance on the portal. You do not need to sign up for dental insurance on the district portal as OCTA facilitates our own plan.

Dental Insurance OPEN ENROLLMENT INFORMATION:

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Blessings In A Backpack Li: Blessings In A Backpack would like to send home peanut butter, jelly and cereal to the students at the end of the school year. If you would like to contribute you can drop your donation off to the YMCA or reach out to Michelle McManus. Would you like to support Blessings In a Backpack? Order a tshirt [here](#).

June Volleyball tournament - Save the date Friday, June 21, 2024 will be the annual volleyball tournament.

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May 13th- Any players can respond to the email following this one. If you want to play let me or your team captain know!

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Health Insurance: If you are having difficulties with Aetna be sure to reach out to Assured Partners (new name) at (315) 641-5848. You should also inform Amanda Hamilton at the EDC and Carrie Patane so she 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.

OCTA Scholarship: The OCTA Scholarship Committee was able to award over \$6,500 to 11 recipients. Thank you to Meghan Donabella and Korinne Laduc for their hard work in leading this committee. Also, thank you to the Scholarship Committee.



AP Customer Care Center

Here To Help You With:

- Benefit Questions
- Claim Issues
- Finding a Provider
- ID Cards
- and more...

Monday–Friday 7:30am–5:00pm (EST)

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

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.

***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



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🔥 New York has established *minimum* temperatures for classrooms, but there is currently no limit to how hot schools can get.

🔧 The combination of aging infrastructure and climate change has increased the effects of extreme temperatures. This poses particular risks to young children, older adults, pregnant women and people with underlying medical conditions — all of whom can be found in public school buildings.

😓 Last week, NYSUT went to the state Capitol to recreate the sweltering conditions reported in classrooms across the state. For a few minutes in our portable sauna, state lawmakers were sweating in the nearly 100 degree temperatures that students and educators endure for hours on end.

Now it's time for them to act!

TAKE ACTION!

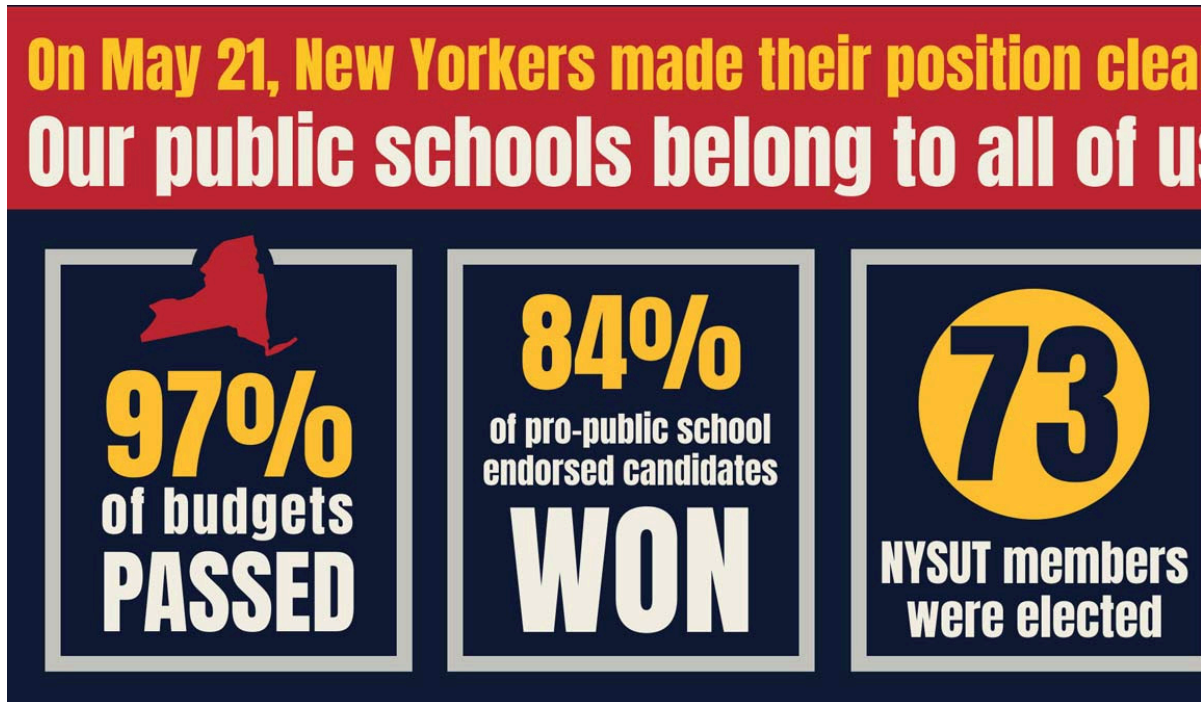
Protect Our Students &
Educators from Extreme Heat
in Schools!

ACTION TYPE: Email State Legislators

21,498

e-Activists have taken this action

New York voters prove public schools unite us



Once again, communities across New York made it clear that they support investing in our students, educators and public schools. [On Tuesday \(May 21\), voters passed 97 percent of school budgets and elected 84 percent of union-endorsed candidates to school boards, including 73 NYSUT members.](#) “Today, our public schools are doing more than ever; not only do they provide world-class education with innovative programs and experiences, they are also supporting the physical, mental, social and emotional needs of our students and their families. Investments in our school budgets and dedication in our school boards are vital to the future of our state. Tuesday’s results show that voters agree,” said NYSUT President Melinda Person.



NYSUT Member Benefits offers a variety of endorsed programs & services that can help you enjoy today, while planning for tomorrow.

As a NYSUT member, you have access to participate in a number of programs and services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. These products have been carefully cultivated to provide members with quality programs at competitive prices, including insurance programs to help you protect your family; legal and financial plans to help you plan for the future; and shopping, travel & personal services to help save you money.

Member Benefits also offers a number of benefits available free of charge to members such as the premium Calm service, Peer Support Line, Financial Learning Center, and more.

Participation in our endorsed programs features the added protection of having a trusted advocate on your side. Our staff take great pride in stepping in to support members with any questions, concerns, or issues that may arise.

No matter what your plans may be, NYSUT Member Benefits is a great place to start. Explore all that your union membership has to offer!



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.



May/June 2024

Congratulations to this year's OCTA Scholarship recipients!!



The 2024 OCTA Scholarship Committee selected **11** recipients of this year's scholarship.

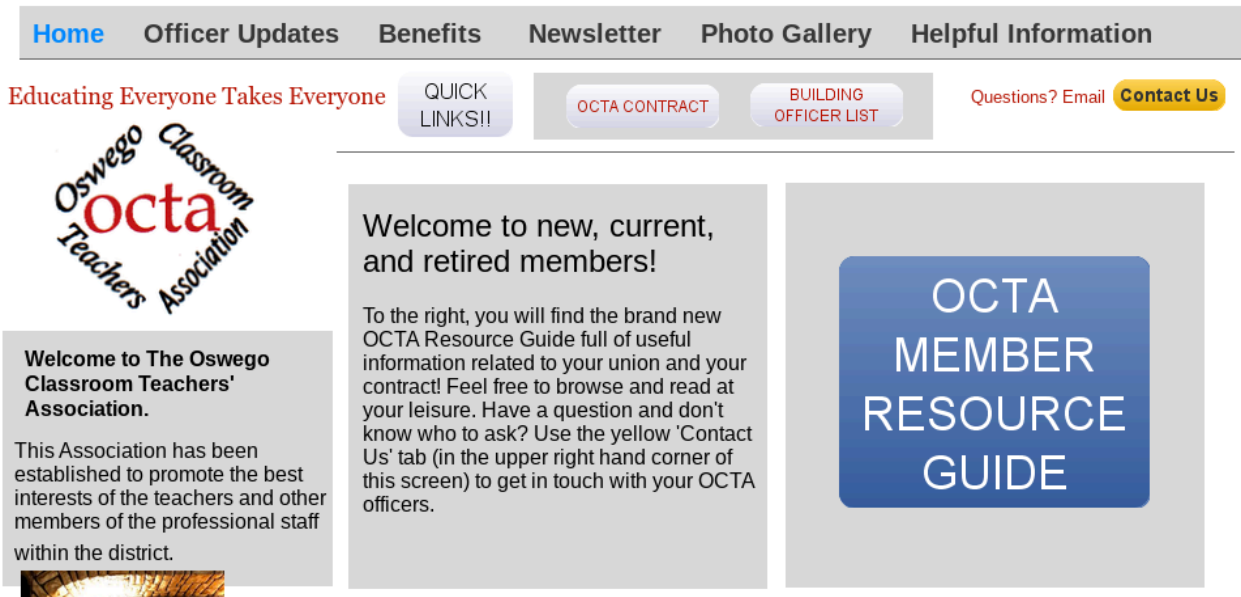
Below are recipients of the 2024 OCTA Scholarship:

- ❖ Ian Cady
- ❖ Alyssa Carr
- ❖ John DelConte
- ❖ Leah Dykas
- ❖ Mason Hall
- ❖ Ian MacKenzie
- ❖ Meghan McManus
- ❖ Teigen Patane
- ❖ Beatrice Rastley
- ❖ Louis Roman
- ❖ Addison Stepien

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

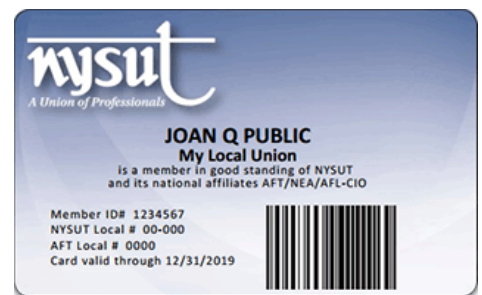
Click on the screenshot of the homepage below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide!

Oswego Classroom Teachers' Association



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.

