

OCTA Advocate

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



NOVEMBER 2024

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Meet your 2024-2025 OCTA Officers!



Carrie Patane
OCTA President



Kim LeRoy
VP Grievance



Jess Burridge
VP Negotiations



Jenn Cahill
VP Pol. Action



Mike Patane
Treasurer



Michelle McManus
Secretary



Dan Rose
VP Newsletter

Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane



With the 2024 election in the rear-view mirror, we motor onward into the new year with many unanswered questions. With all of the division and frustration surrounding our top two political parties, we must continue to be thankful for the stability and constancy that our contract provides. Being a part of a union allows for collective bargaining and the ability to negotiate things like fair wages, consistent, manageable working hours, improved health insurance, and a respectable retirement. Peace of mind in these volatile times.

I truly believe that there are a few things that most of us can agree upon right now no matter our political affiliations: we all want better lives for the working and middle classes, to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace and in our communities (no matter your race, gender or beliefs), safe and welcoming schools, and an economy that works for all stakeholders.

These common goals, these common goods, unite us.

We owe it to our students and their families to stay focused on the task at hand. We survive solely on the idea that togetherness achieves more; our strength to provide the best education possible for those who come before us lies in each other. We must continue to hold these core principles above all else. Take a moment to read the [most recent column by AFT president Randi Weingarten](#), in which she ponders this complex fight for a better future for all.

A special note of thanks to all of our School Related Professionals, whom we [celebrated on Tuesday the 19th](#) - without you we would not have the capacity to create the schools and learning environments that promote high-level teaching and learning.

One final note - as many of you are aware, we are currently involved in contract negotiations with the district. The process is moving forward, although a bit slower than we might have hoped. Small team meetings have been unsuccessful at this point. I will meet with district leaders again on December 12.

In solidarity,
Carrie

Congratulations to our most recent OCTA Spotlight Recipients!



Jill Dunn (OHS) began her teaching career as a substitute in the OCSD in October of 2022 after being a stay-at-home mom for over 20 years. Mrs. Dunn later became certified as a Teaching Assistant. She is mom to four boys, three of which have already graduated from Oswego High School, the whole family moving here from Alabama after her husband took a job on the Biology faculty at SUNY Oswego. Jill has a BA in English from Brigham Young University and plans to go back to school to acquire a masters degree when her kids are grown.

Jill says that she has always wanted to do something that would make a difference in the world, and working with youth seemed like the most logical and accessible way to do that at this point in her life. Outside of work you can find

Jill watching British reality TV (The Great British Baking Show and The Great Pottery Throwdown are favorites), puttering around her house and garden, baking, doing crafty things, and stocking the booth she shares with her friend at the Port City Co-Op. Jill has a keen interest in effective altruism and microlending (ask her about it sometime!) and loves learning, visiting National Parks on road trips with her family, and admits that, like her family dog, KC, she is highly motivated by treats.

Kerry Washburn's (MIN) desire to become a teacher assistant stems from her deep love for children and her commitment to enhancing their school experience. A proud mother of four and the owner of two dogs, her family serves as her daily motivation. Kerry is a graduate of Oswego High School, and outside of her professional responsibilities, she enjoys gardening, baking, and spending quality time with her loved ones. We are excited to welcome Kerry to Minetto Elementary and wish her great success in her first year as a teaching assistant.





Lila Young (OHS) became the new Geometry and FOA2 Teacher at the Oswego High School after student teaching in the building last year. Lila graduated from SUNY Oswego the past May with a degree in both mathematics and adolescent education. Previous to working at Oswego High School, Lila taught and tutored in her hometown of Beacon, NY.

Lila says that her inspiration for becoming a teacher was her high school math teacher Mr. Ryley. She always admired his ability to build relationships with students and explain complex concepts in simple terms. He helped her learn to love math and wanted to encourage others to love math, too.

Lila believes in having her students engage in hands-on activities where they can collaborate with

each other, figure out their mistakes and build communication skills. She aims to create a positive classroom environment where everyone feels safe, comfortable and successful.

Lauren Perry (KPS) is a new 4th grade classroom teacher here in the Oswego City School District. Lauren grew up in Oswego, NY and attended KPS until her family moved to Syracuse when she was in 4th grade. Lauren says that this has been a 'full circle' moment coming back to teach in her former school district. Prior to KPS, Lauren taught at Cooperstown Elementary, Burton Street Elementary in Cazenovia, and Buckhorn Creek Elementary in Holly Springs, NC, all this after graduating from SUNY Cortland with her Master's degree in Childhood Ed. in 2018.

About teaching, Lauren says, "The students and staff around me are hands-down what continue to inspire me to keep teaching and growing as a professional. I love working through the many challenges we're faced with each day as a team, and I love being a lifelong learner alongside our students - the patience, empathy, and humility they have instilled upon me is something I continue to be so grateful for and amazed by. In a world where time often feels fleeting and things are ever-changing, I always strive to stay on the sunny side of life and appreciate the simple joys and obstacles that make each day unique."





Minetto Elementary would like to introduce **Ashley Johnson** as their new fifth grade teacher. Ashley has always loved being part of a school community. Ashley helped in the classrooms when her kids were young and loved volunteering around the holidays. Once Ashley's own children were more independent, she knew she had more to give, so she went back to school for her teaching degree. Ashley's motivation comes from seeing the moment when kids connect all the pieces and the excitement for learning shines! Ashley attended SUNY Oswego and has been married for 13 years. She has one daughter (age 15) and a son (age 12). In her spare time Ashley loves to kayak, be

outside, read and spend time with her family and friends. Ashley loves all kinds of food including sushi and chinese food!

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NYSTRS Seminar Well-Attended



On Tuesday, NOVEMBER 19, over 30 OCTA members were able to listen to a representative from the New York State Teachers Retirement System explain key retirement topics including:

how to be sure you receive all the service credit for which you are eligible, important service milestones and their impact on your pension calculation, the various pension payment options, death benefits and their continuation into retirement, and the steps to take to file for retirement.



If you were unable to attend the seminar, specific questions concerning your individual retirement situation should be discussed during an individual benefits consultation or by calling the Retirement System at (800) 348-7298.

The OCTA hosts two benefit seminars per year, the next one will take place in March 2025. Look for information in the February Advocate!

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](#)



SRP Day SUCCESS!

NYSUT's School-Related Professionals are rising to the challenge every day in our public schools. On Tuesday, Nov. 19, OCTA members across the district joined together in celebration of SRP Recognition Day, wearing SRPs ROCK! stickers and delivering gifts in a show of solidarity.

Who are SRPs? They are your school bus drivers and attendants, cafeteria workers, custodians, teaching assistants and aides, school nurses, maintenance and grounds keepers, clerical and support staff in your schools. Without these dedicated individuals, we would not be the educators we are today. Please continue to show support for these integral union colleagues as we move into the new year!





DENTAL INFO!

Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt
octadentalplan@gmail.com

Have you had a recent address change? Please use the email below to alert Lindsay!

Please feel free to reach out to OCTA Dental at: octadentalplan@gmail.com should you have any questions about this or anything else dental related!

Did you know as a Delta Dental Member you gain access to exclusive perks such as: Virtual Dentistry, BrushSmart, Hearing aids and LASIK discounts, LifePerks, Wellness resources?

Members can easily get all the info on these perks - [just click HERE!](#)

If you need to establish a new dental provider or find a specialist in your area you can search for dental providers by [visiting this link!](#)

Click on [this hyperlink](#) to read the most recent issue of Delta Dental's monthly magazine called [GRIN!](#)



[Click HERE to create an account with Delta Dental or log in to your existing Delta Dental account!](#)

OCTA Blast November 2024

Highlights from our November 2024 OCTA Meeting



SRP Day - November 19th-

On Tuesday Nov. 19th teachers wore SRP stickers to show our solidarity with our school-related professionals who help our students and our classrooms thrive.

Who are SRPs? They are your school bus drivers and attendants, janitors, workers, custodians, teaching assistants and aides, school nurses, maintenance workers, clerical and support staff in your schools. Without these dedicated individuals, we would not be the educators we are today. We also gave each SRP a small token of appreciation.



Vote Cope - Thank you to everyone that donated to Vote Cope and a HUGE thank you to all the building reps who helped with this endeavor! Our donations support Educational issues that impact our profession and make a difference in our careers and our students' educational experiences.

Don't Forget NYS Mandated Reporter Training: - REQUIRED for **ALL** members by April 2025.
[NYS Mandated Reporter Training](#)

Aide Job Description: Click [here](#) for the aides' job descriptions.

OCTA Fall Friends and Family MaryKay Sale: Take 30% off the retail price, don't pay tax or shipping fees! Carrie will email you your total after all orders have been received. Email your order including the Item name, product description, and color to cpatane@oswego.org or order online at www.marykay.com/mrspatane. Be sure to include a note with which building you work in as all orders will be sent to your building by Christmas.

Blessings In A Backpack: Making a Difference, One Child at a Time

Blessings in a Backpack – Oswego has an annual budget of around \$50,000, all of which comes from generous donors like you. This holiday season, please consider donating to support our cause. Also, consider sharing this with your family and friends as well. Our goal is to raise enough funds to feed all of our kids for the year. Our campaign will officially start on Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2024, but early donations are welcome. Please help us make a difference by reaching this goal—your contribution, big or small, makes an impact. Thank you for supporting Blessings in a Backpack – Oswego!



If you prefer Venmo:
Michelle-McManus-35

Write BIB in the memo

Scan the QR Code to
donate through Givegub

Health Care: St. Joseph's Hospital has indicated that if they don't reach an agreement with Aetna they will be dropped from their network as of January 1st, 2025. You will still be able to visit a Dr. through St. Joseph's, but they will be considered out of network. St. Joseph's and Aetna are negotiating, however, this may not be settled before January 1, 2025. If you have a provider at St.

Joseph's and do not want to pay out of network costs, you may need to begin looking for a new provider.

Health Insurance: If you are having difficulties with Aetna be sure to reach out to Assured Partners (was 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 Teladoc and Express Scripts when possible to help reduce plan costs and to lower our premiums.**



Negotiations: We are continuing to negotiate on your behalf. We have moved from small team meetings to one on one negotiations between Dr. Kilmer and Carrie Patane.

SAVE THE DATE: Solidarity Events

Bowling: Date: TBD January or February

Volleyball: June 20, 2025

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. Make sure you write out Oswego Classroom Teachers Association.

Join the Fix Tier 6 Team

Fixing Tier 6 is about solidarity, equity and dignity. Our work is important. Our pensions should reflect that.



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.

***OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE: [2024-2025 Resource Guide](#)**

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

H110F15% 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

THANK YOU to our OCTA Building Leadership 24-25

Member Benefits can help you save during the holidays

Another holiday season full of anticipation and joy is upon us, and NYSUT Member Benefits is ready to help with gift giving. Before purchasing any items on your list, make sure to check out all that Member Benefits has to offer.



Whether you're looking for savings on gift baskets, flowers or chocolates, Bose products, clothing or shoes, movie tickets, sporting events and concerts, theme parks and attractions, restaurants, or thousands of other deals, you'll want to check out MB Discounts & Deals.

While you're on our website, take some time to explore the Buyer's Edge, Inc., ODP Business Solutions, and Purchasing Power programs for new and used vehicles; appliances, televisions, furniture, and mattresses; school and office supplies; electronics; and more.

Don't forget about making sure your family is protected during the holidays and beyond. Going back over 40 years, NYSUT members have historically counted on Member Benefits for crucial

insurance, legal, and financial offerings. Member Benefits endorses quality life, disability, auto/home/renter's, dental and vision, and pet insurance offerings – along with unbiased legal services and financial counseling options.

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



**MEMBER
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November/December 2024

READ NYSUT UNITED MAGAZINE!

Stay up to date with Union News!



Read the latest retirement news in NYSTRS YOURSOURCE newsletter!



New York State
Teachers'
Retirement
System

SEPTEMBER 2024

*Your*Source

A newsletter for active members of the NYS Teachers' Retirement System

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

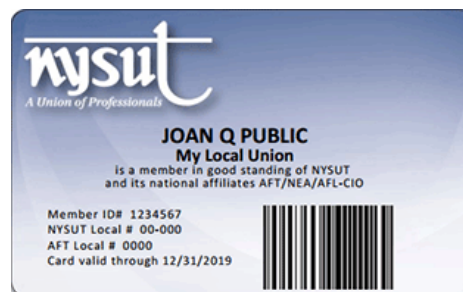
Click on the screenshot of the image below to explore the site! Find quick links to important union documents like the new OCTA Contract, the OCTA building officer list, and the new OCTA resources guide! Click on the image below to link to the [website](#)! **Many of your questions can also be found in the [2024-2025 Resource Guide](#).** **The link to this is ALSO posted on our OCTA Webpage!**



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.

