

# OCTA Advocate

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



## September 2022

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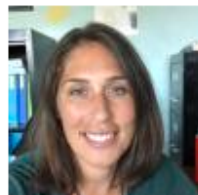
### Meet your 2022-2023 OCTA Officers!



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



It's a challenging time to be an educator.  
This much is clear.

With unprecedented staff shortages, the lingering effects of the pandemic, a seemingly unending list of school safety concerns, and some of the deepest and strongest political (and educational) divisions in history, each day we are able to open the doors to our classrooms and turn on the lights seems like a major victory all on its own.

Yet, we keep showing up.

*You* keep showing up.

Week to week and year to year, you continue to be there for your students.

**You do it all, you endure it all, for them, and it is making a difference** here in our schools, here in our community, here in our state, and yes, here in our beloved country.

I am so proud to call myself an educator in the Oswego City School District.

I'm even prouder to call myself an OCTA member.

We stand together now in unity with our brothers and sisters across the county, across the state, in solidarity, in a union growing stronger despite these difficulties.

Make sure you are registered to vote so our collective voices are heard and **contribute to VOTE-COPE in October** in order to help NYSUT lobbyists advocate for educational issues that impact our profession and make showing up even more rewarding. [With elections looming again in November](#), we must continue to push forward, come out to vote, and elect those who are champions for education, champions for us, and will continue to allow us to make decisions for and on behalf of those most important to us.

Our students.

Your students.

GO BUCS!

In solidarity,

Carrie

## OCTA New Hires in the September Spotlight!



**OMS:** Back row: BJ Galka, Connor Griffin, Amanda Wilkinson  
- Front row: Lauren Peel, Bryan RaPray



**CER:** TOP: Emily Ball, Hannah Wakeman, Rebecca Flack  
BOTTOM: Shelly Welden, Tonyajo Wiegand



**FPS:** (From L-R): Jessica Bye, Building Sub, Kristina Goodman, School Psychologist, Elizabeth Sullivan, TA, Krystle Carr, TA, Kristina DeStevens, TA.



**FLS (L-R):** Kaylee Allen, Monica Morse, Linda Clary, Jessica Oh



**KPS:** From left to right, Caitlyn Krueger, Claudia Chetney, Terra Hsu, Madison Rahn



**KPS:** Brandon Grant



## WHAT IS VOTE-COPE AND WHY CONTRIBUTE?



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

OCTA's campaign will run from OCTOBER 12 - 28th; just in time for us to show our thankfulness for all that the union provides. **OCTA presidents will receive their packets at the October OCTA meeting. They will then, with the help of bldg reps, meet with each member for our 2022 campaign. All completed pledge forms must be returned to me at FLS no later than Friday, October 28th, so I can submit them to payroll and pass along to NYSUT. [Learn MORE about VOTE-COPE and political action: CLICK HERE!](#)**

# New York State Teachers Retirement System



**SIGN UP NOW!!!** [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org)

**New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) Benefits Presentation (presented by OCTA)**

**November 9 from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m**

A real NYSTRS Representative will discuss key topics you need to know.

The session will include an overview of pension calculation rules by tier, as well as:

- 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.
- The steps to take to file for retirement.

*We encourage general questions in this public setting. Specific questions concerning your individual situation should be discussed during an individual benefits consultation or by calling the Retirement System at (800) 348-7298.*

**Please join us for this one-hour NYSTRS Retirement Benefits Consultation on Wednesday, November 9 starting at 5:00 p.m.**

**PLEASE let Dan Rose [drose@oswego.org](mailto:drose@oswego.org) know that you are interested in attending this in person seminar. This seminar will be presented at the OCTA Office (122 W 2nd St) across from CAMS downtown. Food and drink will be available courtesy of the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association.**

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](#)



## 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](https://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 24 - October 28

&

February 13 - February 17

Thanks!

Meghan Donabella & Korrine LaDuc  
OCTA Scholarship Co-Chairs



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## **OCTA Newsblast September 2022**

*Highlights from our September OCTA Meeting*

### **Oswego Teachers Employee Federal Credit Union:**

The district works closely with the Teachers' Credit Union as well as other banks, but there are always advantages of being in the credit union, such as great loan rates, summer skip on loan payments, and summer savings accounts (to receive 5 paychecks over the summer) so check them out. Oswego Teachers Employee Federal Credit Union

<https://www.oswegoteacherscu.org/> (315) 342-4574

### **Salary Notices:**

Meghan and Rachel were hoping to get these out before our first paycheck. They were not able to. They should arrive by the beginning of the week. Compare your pay stub to your salary notice once you receive it.

### **New Peer Support Line offered:**

NYSUT Member Benefits has launched the [Peer Support Line](#), a confidential, peer-to-peer, dial-in helpline free to all members and their families. Staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals, this service will provide support and referrals to callers seeking assistance on a wide array of personal, family, and work-related problems. For more information or assistance, call 844-444-0152.



**CTE Credits:**

Be sure to check Front Line (My Learning Plan) to make sure all of your CTE credit hours are shown. If you need 100 hours every 5 years to maintain certification it is your responsibility to make sure the info is accurate.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Blessings In A Backpack TRIVIA NIGHT** will be **Nov 4th** from 6:30 - 10:00 at the Oswego Elks. Blessings provides food 38 weekends each year for 400 Oswego School District students. Their biggest fundraiser is back after a two year break. Please consider getting a team together for Blessings In A Backpack Trivia Night. Print the form attached below and send in ASAP.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uPSprDbA02\\_nvW\\_-PIQJ1fLGWkEi7mYWF9xdjVQ-X4/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uPSprDbA02_nvW_-PIQJ1fLGWkEi7mYWF9xdjVQ-X4/edit)

**The FALL Bowling tournament** is being run by Carol Janice (stay tuned for the date). Start choosing your teammates and work on your team names!

**The end of year Volleyball tournament** needs a coordinator. Please contact Carrie Patane if you are available to work on organizing this event. Keep your calendars open... The tournament is scheduled for **Friday June 16th**.

**Building "solidarity meetings"** are typically run by building sunshine committees and take place on payday Fridays or once a month on a payday.

**Once again the NSEA will be hosting an AFT Teacher Leader Program.** This work centers around advocacy, policy, political action, action research, and teacher empowerment. It is held one Saturday a month for 8 months and includes a **\$1500 stipend** upon successful completion. It's open to all NYSUT/AFT members, SRP's, service providers, teachers...all NYSUT members. One participant last year stated that this program was an eye opener and game changer that empowered them to not only define an issue but to effectively work to resolve it to the benefit of our students and members. If interested or have members who are, please email John Kuryla, NSEA President for specifics.

**Technology Equipment Issues:** Please do not move technology. Put anything you need help with on the Helpdesk.

**School-Related Professionals Leadership Conference for 2022!** - If you are an OCTA TA **AND** a UNION REP **AND** are interested in becoming more involved with the union, you could be eligible to attend this conference Nov 4-6 in Albany. Have your building president contact Carrie Patane if you are interested.

**NYSUT Campaigning for John Manion:**

**If you are interested in helping support a campaign for John Mannion, please attend a meeting at the OCTA office on W. 2nd street on Wednesday, Sept 21st at 4:30**

FYI: Local union members may be coming to your door 10/8 and 10/29 from various local unions to talk with you about your support in electing John Manion for State Senate. As a former teacher union president, has worked hard and made progress on a number of educational issues. If you would like to support John Manion you are also invited to help out with this Labor Walk. See below:

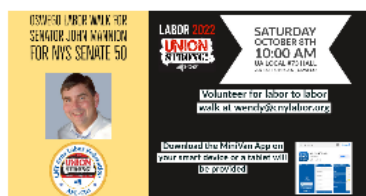
**Oswego County Labor Council update:**

Please join us in Oswego on Sat, Oct 8 & 29 at 10:00 am at the Local #73

Plumbers and Steamfitters Hall, 705 East Seneca Street, Oswego

Please RSVP with how many people you can commit to bring to the Labor Walk

& help us spread the word!



Please download the MiniVan app on your smart device or a tablet will be provided. Food and drinks will be provided.



**Need to register to vote? See important dates below.**

### Key Dates

Oct. 14	Deadline to register in person	Oct. 29	First day to vote early in person
Oct. 14	Deadline to <a href="#">register by mail</a>	Nov. 06	Last day to vote early in person
Oct. 14	Deadline to <a href="#">register online</a>	Nov. 08	Deadline to mail ballot by
Oct. 24	Deadline to request a <a href="#">mail-in ballot</a>	Nov. 08	Election Day

**OCTA RESOURCE GUIDE:** <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kc9DjnHtYkQTqCKMI2iw4Krey8BFebZtAO5i1wM05Gs>

**COVID:** To Report a Positive At Home COVID Test in OSWEGO COUNTY: PLEASE REPORT!!!

[https://health.oswegocounty.com/information/2019\\_novel\\_coronavirus/isolation\\_quarantine\\_guidance.php](https://health.oswegocounty.com/information/2019_novel_coronavirus/isolation_quarantine_guidance.php)

**OCSD Employee COVID Hotline: 315-341-2055**

OCSD Student COVID Hotline: 315-341-2050

**\*District Safety Hotline-** If you have a safety concern the district has a confidential safety hotline. **The number is 315-341-2056.**

### **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 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.)

### OCTA Building Leadership 22-23

CER  
Terri Stacy  
Ted Beers

FPS  
Jamie Brancato  
Julie Tubolino

KPS  
Mary Lynne Maxwell  
Hope Mazuroski

FLS  
Michaela Kearns  
Amy Armet

MIN  
Crystal Mason  
Amy Sullivan  
Keri Hunter

OHS  
Gina Iorio  
Heather Sugar  
Robert Dumas

OMS  
Jeff Brown  
Alison Anderson  
Mary Alice Brennan

## OCTA Dental, Medical, Vision Rates: 2022 -23

Check your paycheck stub to make sure you are not overpaying for your insurances. If you have been, reach out to Meghan Wilson and Rachel Enos to correct this error.

**Medical Insurance:** The Oswego City School District provides health insurance to its employees from Aetna. Members will pay **15%** of their insurance premium for the 2022-2023 school year.

### Costs 2022-2023

Individual      **\$1075.96**

Family          **\$3519.41**

### 21 pay periods

Per pay period \$51.23

Per Pay period \$167.59

When you go to an appointment you will be asked to pay a **\$20 copay**. If you go to an ER you will be asked to pay a **\$50 copay** and an Urgent Care will require a **\$25 copay**.

Maximum amount of **out of pocket expenses** (co pays): January 1-December 31

Individual: \$500

Member plus 1: \$600

Family: \$700

If you have questions about your health insurance you can contact

Melissa Syrell. Her email is [msyrell@oswego.org](mailto:msyrell@oswego.org). Phone number 315-341-2023. If you have any other issues, you can contact AETNA directly (see your insurance card) or if they cannot assist you, call ENV - our Third Party Administrator. When you go to the Dr. or have to fill out forms regarding health insurance use the words AETNA.

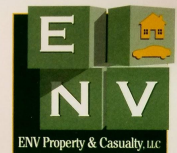
When you have a qualifying life event (marriage, birth of a child, change in spouse's benefits, etc), you only have a **30 day window** to notify Heidi Sweeney or Melissa Syrell. We will then create a life event in the HRConnection portal for you to make the appropriate changes. If you do not notify us within the 30 days, you may lose the ability to make an insurance change or add your baby/spouse.

### Prescription Drug Benefits

### The ENV Companies



ENV Insurance Agency



ENV Property & Casualty, LLC

(315) 641-5848 • (800) 887-9146  
www.insurewithenv.com

Retail Pharmacy (local pharmacy)	Mail Order
\$5 for generic	\$0 for generic
\$15 preferred brand name	\$15 preferred brand name
\$25 non- preferred brand	\$25 non-preferred brand

### Vision Insurance

Two networks are offered, EyeMed and VSP, both through Ameritas. You will get cards in the mail with just the employee name listed. The eye doctor can call and verify benefits with the employees ssn. This will come to you in the mail in a plain looking envelope; many have thought it was junk mail so just be on the lookout if you sign up for it.

### Costs 2022-2023

#### Costs 2022-2023

Individual \$99.84

Employee +1 \$190.08

Family \$291.36

#### 21 pay periods

Per pay period \$4.75

Per pay period \$9.05

Per pay period \$13.87

### Dental Insurance      Questions: Lindsay Voight [octadentalplan@gmail.com](mailto:octadentalplan@gmail.com)

OCTA provides your dental insurance. The plan is overseen by **Delta Dental**. We are self insured and oversee our own plan. **Our dental plan is DIFFERENT from the District/CSEA plan.** Once you are enrolled, you don't need to do anything else the next year to continue your plan. If you want to change anything, you will need to do so with Lindsay Voight during Open Enrollment (usually in May) or within 30 days of a COBRA qualifying event (marriage/birth/etc).

#### Cost 2022-2023

Individual \$52.50

Member plus 1 \$577.50

Family \$1155.00

Two in Unit \$577.50

#### 21 pay periods

Per pay period \$2.50

Per pay period \$27.50

Per pay period \$55

Per pay period \$27.50

## OCTA Welcomes New Dental Fund Administrator

August 11, 2022

Dear OCTA Dental Plan Recipient:

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as I will be joining the Oswego Classroom Teachers' Benefit Fund as its new administrator effective September 1, 2022.

Previously, I spent 20 years working in the fields of healthcare and education. It is my intention to bring those experiences, in addition to my dedication to efficiency, promptness, and detailed service, to bear positively on your experiences with your dental plan. I would also like to extend my thanks to Heidi Sweeney, Pat Armet, Carrie Patane, and the rest of the OCTA leadership for helping to assist during this transition. Thanks to our collective efforts, I am confident you will experience the kind of prompt and productive support you've come to expect.

**Please note that as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 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.

I am very excited to be taking on this new role, and I look forward to assisting you with any questions or concerns that you may have regarding your dental insurance.

Enjoy the precious remainder of your summer!

Sincerely,



Lindsay Voigt





# A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Saving and Investing for K-12 Educators



Dear Teacher,

While money doesn't grow on trees, it can grow when you save and invest wisely. Knowing how to secure your financial well-being is one of the most important things you'll ever need in life. You just need to know a few basics, form a plan, and be ready to stick to it. No matter how much or little money you have, the important thing is to educate yourself about your opportunities. In this brochure, we'll cover the basics on managing debt and credit, saving and investing, and planning for retirement.

[Read the full pamphlet here!](#)

## 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**

**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.

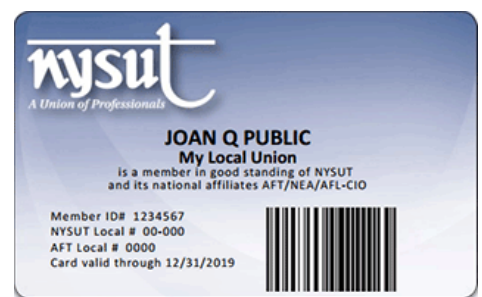
Welcome to new, current, and retired members!

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**

## Need A Quick NYSUT Membership Card?

[Login here and download a PDF of your membership card.](#)



To request a replacement for this card, call NYSUT at 1-800-342-9810 ext. 6224

*OCTA Advocate* is published by the Oswego Classroom Teachers Association, West 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Oswego, NY. **President:** Carrie Patane, **VP Grievance:** Kim LeRoy **VP Negotiations:** Gretchen Coakley **VP Political Action:** Jenn Cahill, **VP Newsletter:** Dan Rose, **Secretary:** Michelle McManus, **Treasurer:** Mike Patane. Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

