

OCTA Advocate

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



SUMMER 2024

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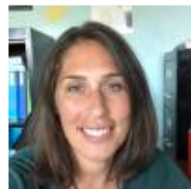
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[LINK to OCTA Webpage](#)

Meet your 2022-2023 OCTA Officers!



Carrie Patane
OCTA President

Kim LeRoy
VP Grievance

Jess Burrige
VP Negotiations

Jenn Cahill
VP Pol. Action

Mike Patane
Treasurer

Michelle McManus
Secretary

Dan Rose
VP Newsletter



Message from your OCTA President - Carrie Patane

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy summer. Here's hoping that you are utilizing your time away to reinvigorate and rejuvenate your teaching soul!

While most educators are using these summer days (and nights) for some well-deserved relaxation and stress release, union heads and educational organizations have been busy assembling and deliberating in preparation for November's monumental and historic presidential election. [On July 25th, soon-to-be presidential nominee Kamala Harris spoke at the American Federation of Teachers National Convention in Houston, Texas](#) where she outlined an inclusive vision for our country moving forward using words like opportunity, freedom, safety and dignity.

The 1.8 million member AFT is proud to be the first union to endorse vice-president Harris for her candidacy, and now stands firmly behind her in her bid for presidency. Harris ended her convention speech by posing a question to the electric throng of supporters in the auditorium: "Do we want to live in a country of freedom, compassion and rule of law, or a country of chaos, fear, and hate?"

On a more local level, your OCTA leaders have also continued work this summer, making preparations to meet new members in August and continuing the negotiations process as we work to settle a new contract.

We have also worked to secure access for all OCTA members to a [Legal Service Plan](#). 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.)**

This September, 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.

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.

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

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

Plan Features: [Webpage](#)

Congratulations to our most recent OCTA Spotlight Recipients!

Fitzhugh Park would like to recognize Mrs. Jamie Brancato and Mrs. Kathy Forger for their years of service at Fitzhugh Park Elementary and wish them well in retirement!



Mrs. Brancato has spent 30 years in our district. In retirement Jamie excitedly says that she “looks forward to babysitting her FIRST EVER grandchild, tutoring, possibly subbing, beginning her mornings at the gym and just having a more open schedule.” In the meantime, you will find Jamie encouraging our many students to keep doing their best reading and supporting our staff with her many words of wisdom.

Mrs. Kathy Forger has dedicated the last 18 years to our school. About teaching, Mrs Forger says, “I love working with my first graders and building relationships with them...seeing their growth throughout the year is just amazing! My team and coworkers are the best. I am lucky to work with such kind and supportive people!” We feel the same about Kathy. In retirement, Kathy will be moving with her family to Aiken, South Carolina where she will be enjoying new adventures in the beautiful warm Carolina-sunshine. For now, you can often find Kathy holding a hand or hear her quietly working with her students and getting them excited to do their best. These two ladies will be missed tremendously. Congratulations Jamie and Kathy!

Elaine Lee has been a Teaching Assistant at OMS for 5 years, starting out supporting the 8 east team in the areas of science and social studies. She was a substitute teacher and sub teaching assistant prior to working full time at OMS. In that role Elaine was employed all over the district, from Kindergarten through high school. Elaine says that she is inspired by a love of learning and hopes to spread that joy to her students! Elaine loves walking in the woods, fishing, collecting rocks, photography, gardening, making jewelry and spending time with her family. She spent much of her childhood in her mother’s native country Panama, and her early teen years on the island of Guam.





Rachel (Henderson) Porter was a School Counselor for OCSD for over 30 years, until she retired in November of 2023. She began her career at The Academy, the former Alternative School run by OCSD. She spent the rest of her career at Oswego High School, where she also led the Counseling Department for many years as team leader. Rachel gave so much of herself to her students and colleagues, and her goal was always to help others however she could.

Rachel is originally from Orchard Park, NY, but attending SUNY Oswego brought her to the area, where she lived for the majority of her career. Rachel has two daughters, Emily and Allie, and two step-children, Taylor and Bryce, with her husband Dave Porter. She has one granddaughter named Ivy. Rachel lives her life full of adventure and hope, and can be found (these days) playing pickleball, biking, hiking, kayaking, listening to live music, collecting sea glass, or trying out a new restaurant. She is always making new friends and asking people about their lives. She is very missed at OHS, but her colleagues are so very happy for this new chapter in her life and continue to live vicariously through her many adventures.

Chris Mangelo will be retiring this year after being with us (OHS) since 1998.

Prior to his time in Oswego, he taught in Fulton schools. Chris has taught essentially every technology class that OHS has to offer throughout his career. Some of the courses he's taught include Principles of Engineering, WBUC, DDP, Yearbook, Photography, Advanced Photography, Woodworking, and Structures, among many others. Chris entered the OHS Paradox Yearbook into competitions at Syracuse University and Columbia University, bringing home many awards. He also taught at the college level for many years while teaching at OHS. Chris has been a mentor to many students and inspired countless young minds during his time here. Chris helped to organize the battle of the bands for several years, as well. Outside of school, Chris enjoys hiking and mountain biking. In his retirement, he plans to do more hiking and biking, as well as more fishing. Chris also plans to spend quality time with his granddaughter in retirement! Thank you for your many years of service to the students of OHS, and enjoy your well deserved retirement, Chris!





DENTAL INFO!

Dental Administrator Lindsay Voigt octadentalplan@gmail.com



 **Resources at
your fingertips**
Go online to manage your plan

Whether you need to check your benefits or select a new dentist, you can do it all with Delta Dental's online tools.

Create an account

What you can do:

- Check your plan details and eligibility.
- Browse claim history.
- Download plan documents.
- Find an in-network dentist.
 - View your member ID card or print a paper copy.
 - Update your settings to paperless.



Try it out: Go to deltadentalins.com and choose Login to create an account or log in to your existing account. (Your ID number is your Social Security #)
Tip: Access your benefits info on mobile, tablet or desktop!

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

VOLLEYBALL SUCCESS!

Submitted by OCTA President, Carrie Patane

A HUGE THANK YOU to Julie Tubolino for coordinating this end-of-year event and to everyone who participated. I LOVE that we have created an event that brings our entire district together and unites at the end of the year as we begin our Summer! (CER, WE MISSED YOU!)

Next year will mark the 20 years since our FIRST tournament in 2005!!

SAVE THE DATE and complete this survey: [LINK TO 2025 SURVEY](#) (VOTE for TH June 19th (NO SCHOOL) or keep it on Friday, June 20th, 2025).



(Above photo of winning team made up of OMS teachers - CONGRATS!)

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

OCTA NEWSBLAST



June 2024

Highlights from our June 2024 OCTA Meeting

Negotiations: OCTA will continue negotiating with the district over the summer. We could potentially need to get in touch with you for an **in person vote over the summer**. Please fill out the form below so that we are able to contact you. **Information Needed:** Please fill out this [Contact Form ASAP](#) (include your **shirt size**)

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](#)

Your VOTE Cope Dollars at work.

The 2024 legislative session wrapped up last week, and it was a resounding success for NYSUT members, our students and our public schools. **You helped it happen!** Read the [article](#) to learn of victories that we came together to achieve. Now that the legislature has passed these bills, our focus shifts to encouraging the governor to sign them into law.

June Volleyball tournament - **Please stop at Volleyball Friday, June 21st. It's been a long, tough year. Get together with your OCTA Brothers and Sisters, Celebrate our retirees, and enjoy some relaxation and competition. This is a fundraiser - there will be raffles!**

RETIREES:

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

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 Teledoc and Express Scripts when possible to help reduce plan costs and to lower our premiums.**



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.

***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

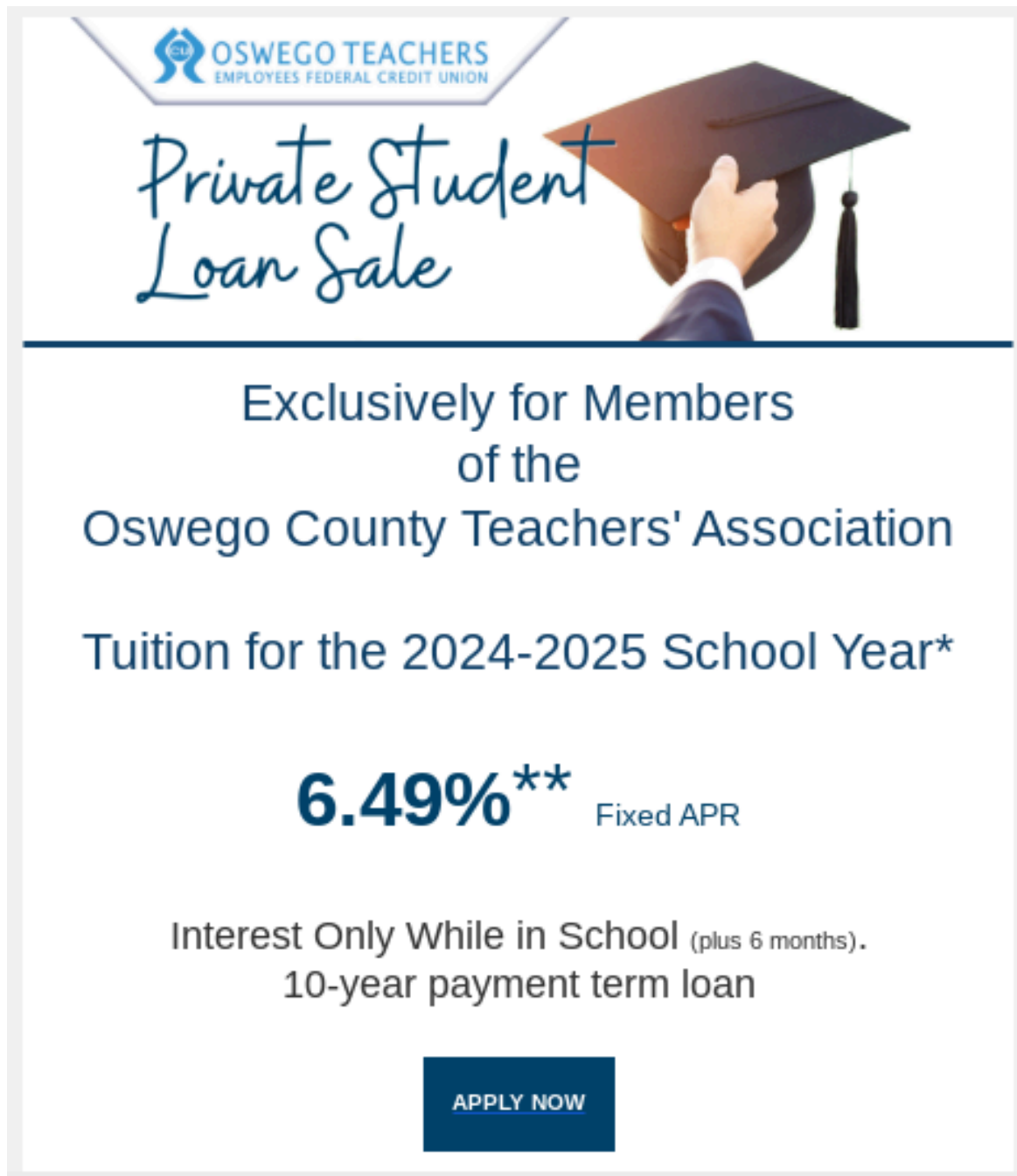
NYSUT = member benefits (Life ins, legal, etc.)


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

TRS= money you pay into NYS Teachers Retirement

Student Loan Sale!

Oswego Federal Teachers Credit Union



 OSWEGO TEACHERS
EMPLOYEES FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Private Student
Loan Sale

Exclusively for Members
of the
Oswego County Teachers' Association

Tuition for the 2024-2025 School Year*

6.49%** Fixed APR

Interest Only While in School (plus 6 months).
10-year payment term loan

[APPLY NOW](#)

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

Keep up-to-date on union news!

American Educator



Volume 48, no. 2

Where We Stand: Defending Democracy

Fighting for Our Freedom to Teach and Learn
Randi Weingarten

The Imperiled Right to Learn

Teaching in Troubled Times
Michael Bérubé

Free to Teach, Free to Learn

Examining the Lines Between Education, Discrimination, and Indoctrination
Andrew Manuel Crespo

Defending Academic Freedom

How Bipartisan Coalitions Can Strengthen Our Educational System
Patricia Okker

A Call to Disrupt the Deprofessionalization of Teaching

Standing Together for Truth
H. Richard Milner IV

Change, Challenge, and Creating Safe Learning Spaces

A Conversation with School Board Members
Peter Argeropoulos, Sharon Giglio

Teaching in Polarized Times

New Professional Development for Finding the Truth and Engaging in Civil Discussions
Tim Krueger

Share My Lesson: Creating Safe Spaces for Civil Classroom Discussion

The 2024 legislative session wrapped up last week, and it was a resounding success for NYSUT members, our students and our public schools.

[You helped it happen!](#) (read more here)

In just the past few months, NYSUT activists sent over 135,000 emails to legislators in support of our issues. You also turned out to rally for key issues like school funding and fixing Tier 6.

Read on for a quick overview of some of the victories we came together to achieve. Now that the legislature has passed these bills, our focus shifts to encouraging the governor to sign them into law.





On Thursday, New York state made history by enacting the nation's first laws to protect children from social media's harmful effects. NYSUT has supported two proposed bills since last fall. NYSUT President Melinda Person joined Governor Hochul, Attorney General James and other lawmakers, parents and advocates to witness these historic bills being signed into law. "Protecting children online in the midst of a mental health crisis is common sense, and we are proud that New York is leading the way," said President Melinda Person. "NYSUT educators across the state made their voices heard to support these bills, and we will continue to do everything in our power to safeguard the mental health of our students." *Pictured above: NYSUT President Melinda Person joins lawmakers and advocates at the signing ceremony for the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids and The New York Child Data Protection Acts.*

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

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with links for Home, Officer Updates, Benefits, Newsletter, Photo Gallery, and Helpful Information. Below the menu is a banner with the slogan "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone" and several buttons: "QUICK LINKS!!", "OCTA CONTRACT", "BUILDING OFFICER LIST", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a welcome message, a resource guide button, and a paragraph about the association's purpose.

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.

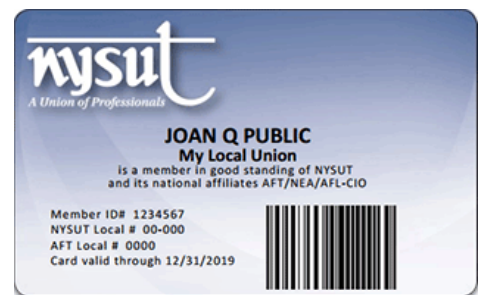
Welcome to new, current, and retired members!

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 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.

