

# SRP NewsLink

A NEWSLETTER FOR NYSUT'S SCHOOL-RELATED PROFESSIONALS LOCAL LEADERS

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[www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org)

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## Political action key to a better future

*Stephen Rechner  
NYSUT Director At-large  
President, Union of Clerical,  
Administrative & Technical Staff  
at NYU*

Like most people, I am bombarded daily by emails asking me to sign petitions for important issues. But I am also aware that many of these "petitions" have a dual purpose of gathering information about me, specifically, my email address so that I can be bombarded with still more petitions.

But not all political petitions are created equal, and not all organizations circulating them have hidden agendas. One organization that is truly on the level is New York State United Teachers.

Don't let the name fool you. NYSUT is about a whole lot more than teachers.

I have worked with NYSUT, not only on the many issues affecting teachers and the attacks on public education, but also on issues that affect all workers. Issues like preventing the privatization of Social Security, getting pro-labor can-

didates elected statewide and nationally, fighting Gov. Cuomo's property tax cap that has hamstrung local school districts, supporting improved gun control legislation and fighting for marriage equality. These are just a few of the many issues

**"He who opens  
a school door,  
closes a prison"**

—Victor Hugo

for which NYSUT has advocated and agitated. Some of these issues we have won, and some need more work.

By way of disclosure, I am on the NYSUT Board of Directors. I have been on the Board since 2005, first as a director at-large for School-Related Professionals and, since 2008, as the at-large director representing the private sector NYSUT constituency.

How NYSUT is working to move these and other important issues for-

ward is the focus of this column. NYSUT, like each of our union locals, is nothing more than the sum of our members, you and me. Sure, there are NYSUT lobbyists who roam the halls of the Capitol trying to talk sense to our legislators, but talking alone is never enough in politics.

Legislators respond to voters (STOP LAUGHING), really, they do. Yes, some legislators may respond to big donors first, but they reconsider when the will of voters is communicated loud and clear.

Loud and clear is the purpose and goal of the NYSUT Member Action Center (MAC). On the NYSUT MAC website, there are pre-written letters (which you can add/edit/rewrite, if you wish)

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**nysut**  
A Union of Professionals

Representing more than  
600,000 professionals in  
education and health care  
For more, see [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

# Celebrate SRP Recognition Day Nov. 19

School-Related Professionals Recognition day is Nov. 19. Now is the time to begin planning your celebrations for this important day. How about throwing a breakfast or lunch honoring your support staffers? Or perhaps coffee and donuts? Or even a big sheet cake to enjoy some sweet time of appreciation? Be sure to let the administration, teachers, and PTA know of this special day ahead of time — they may want to participate in some sort of celebration, too.

NYSUT is here to help. You can order buttons online for the members of your local that say “SRPs make a Difference.” Visit [www.cvent.com/d/94q77w](http://www.cvent.com/d/94q77w). Your SRP Appreciation Day Celebration Packet also includes a guide booklet that is full of celebration ideas, posters to advertise your special day and information about a contest to have your local featured in a NYSUT publication and on its website.

Extra posters and fliers can be downloaded from the

SRP page at [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

“This is a well-deserved honor for the hard-working women and men who do so much to help transport, educate and feed our children, and keep our schools clean and safe, and the offices running smoothly,” said NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue. “Please be sure to contact Margaret MacCartney, NYSUT SRP coordinator at [mmaccart@nysutmail.org](mailto:mmaccart@nysutmail.org) to share photos and stories of your celebration.”



NYSUT V.P.  
Kathleen Donahue

## IMPORTANT DATES

### Election Day is Nov. 5

Get Out And VOTE



### Committee of 100

March 3-4 ~ Desmond, Albany

### NEA ESP Conference

March 7-9 ~ San Francisco

### NYSUT Local Presidents Conference

April 3-4 ~ Hilton, New York City

### NYSUT Representative Assembly

April 4-6 Hilton, New York City

### AFT PSRP Conference

April 11-13 ~ Orlando, Fla.

## Political Action key to future

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that address issues important to workers and educators that you can easily fax to your legislators. NYSUT has a membership of more than 600,000. When 600,000 members send faxes, sign petitions and make phone calls, legislators have to listen.

If you question why an SRP — even an SRP who does not work in K-12, as I do not — should even be interested in issues affecting education, you will find the answer in another question. Specifically, whose children are NYSUT members educating? The answer is your children, the children you may yet to have, your grandchildren, as well as your nieces, nephews and neighbors.

Even if, like me, you have no children

of your own and your grandchildren, nieces, and nephews are fully grown, supporting public education is still in your self interest. Education is the key to future prosperity, and if we want future generations to have the earning capacity to pay the taxes that will fund our Social Security and Medicare, that will repair and expand our national infrastructure, and who will have the purchasing power to perpetuate a growing economy, then we all have to support public education.

So what are you waiting for? Go to the MAC website ([www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org), click on the link “Take Action Now”) and get politically active through NYSUT. It takes just a few minutes and it really is in your best interest. And yes, there’s a MAC app. Do it today, do it now.

## SRPNewsLink

SRP NewsLink is a newsletter published periodically for New York State United Teachers School-Related Professionals leaders. NYSUT locals and staff have permission to reprint all NewsLink content.

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## A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

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**Karen Lee Arthmann**  
*SRP Advisory Committee chair*



They say that life is a journey and not a destination. We have come down diverse paths to get to where we are — in our career choices, our life choices and in our choice to be members of our union and the role we play.

There has never been a more important time to be an active member of our organization. When the union began, there was a clear purpose: to achieve a better way of living for our members and to protect them from being harmed by those in more powerful positions. Today we are, again, in a fight for our lives and our livelihoods. Our conditions

have clearly improved over the many years we have battled for our rights, but there is still much work to be done.

As we continue on our journey, keep in mind that anyone's loss is everyone's loss and, as Benjamin Franklin said, "We must all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately." I know you are aware that in some states not only have members been lost, but collective bargaining rights have been lost too. We must make sure that it does not happen in our state, and that it ends in our country.

Thank you all for giving your

time in attending our state conference for SRPs, joining in walks that save lives, as well as giving your hard-earned money to disaster relief causes. I know I am preaching to the choir when I ask you to give even more of your time to help our union thrive, but you have proven over and over that you are the ones who will step up and take care of business.

Good luck as we continue our journey and don't forget to dream big.

In solidarity,  
Karen

## Welcome back

**Sandra Carner-Shafran, SRP At-Large Director**

Welcome back to another school year. Once again it will be full of "do more with less."

I was asked as one of your SRP directors on the NYSUT Board to write a message to the members that I represent. I really tried to come up with something to help us feel like times are going to get better. Then I felt I should ask you to think about how we can promote a

successful year for everyone.

The four questions below are from my Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) coach's binder that we use in my BOCES. I hope that these questions will inspire you to make this school year the best.

Four questions to ponder:

- Are we doing what we should be doing?
- Is it making a difference?
- What is the smallest

change that will make the biggest difference?

- What does better look like?

Perhaps these questions will be the catalyst for great conversation and idea sharing at your next union meeting.

Have a great and productive school year. I look forward to seeing you at upcoming NYSUT functions.



# National conferences scheduled for 2014

The 2014 NEA Education Support Professionals (ESP) Conference will be held March 7-9, at the Marriott Marquis hotel in San Francisco. Registration will begin mid-fall. Conference information can be found at [www.nea.org/esp](http://www.nea.org/esp).

The 2014 AFT PSRP Conference will be held April 11-13 in Orlando, Fla. Information will be forthcoming on their website at [www.aft.org/psrp](http://www.aft.org/psrp).

## Education Support Professionals



## PTSI 2014 NYS Laws & Regs for School Bus Drivers, Monitors & Attendants

The Pupil Transportation Safety Institute's 2014 *NYS Laws and Regs for School Bus Drivers, Monitors and Attendants* booklet is available through NYSUT at no charge. For an individual copy or enough for the transportation workers in your local, contact Linda Watkins at 800-342-9810, ext. 6029 or [lwatkins@nysutmail.org](mailto:lwatkins@nysutmail.org) with your order.



## New Seminars This Fall

[www.nysut.org/elt](http://www.nysut.org/elt)

Professional development designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and advance your career

- Poverty: The Impact on Learning**
- Common Core Standards: What SRPs Need to Know**

[www.nysut.org/elt](http://www.nysut.org/elt) • 800.528.6208



SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMART PHONE

**ELT**  
nysut Education & Learning Trust  
Advance your career. Refresh your mind.





# Navigating the NYS retirement systems with ERS and TRS

NYSUT SRP members are covered by two New York state retirement systems. If you are a certified teaching assistant, you are in the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS). All other job titles (custodial, clerical, nurses, aides, food service, transportation, etc.) are covered by the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System or (NYSERS).

See the information below about the two systems.

## ERS is here to help

There are many ways to get help with ERS questions. Several of the NYSUT regional offices have an ERS consultant on staff to help answer questions. Also, you can call the retirement system's toll free number at 866-805-0990 to speak to a representative or make an appointment to go to their office. Their website, [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire), is an excellent resource to get answers to frequently asked ques-



tions and get information about beneficiary changes, loans, service credit, annual statement info, forms, etc. There is also a pension calculator to project your pension benefits.

## TRS goes YouTube

Navigating the ins and outs of NYSTRS can be difficult and frustrating

at times. NYSTRS does have an excellent website, [www.nystrs.org](http://www.nystrs.org), and an outstanding staff who are more than willing to assist members. To further assist NYSTRS members there is also a new tool now available in the form of YouTube videos. NYSTRS actually has its own YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/user/NYSTRS](http://www.youtube.com/user/NYSTRS). There are 13 different videos covering such topics as:

- A tutorial for new members
- Prior service credit
- Filing for disability protection
- Beneficiary information and options
- Countdown to retirement
- Accessing your personal retirement information via the NYSTRS website

These videos are both informative and often very humorous. It is well worth taking some time to check them out.



# Helping to keep cash in your wallet

As hard-working New Yorkers continue to tighten their belts and look for ways to save money on everyday (and special) purchases, now is the time to check out all that NYSUT Member Benefits has to offer.

Our endorsed discount programs offer a great opportunity to save some money on your purchases this fall and winter. Have you been thinking about purchasing a new refrigerator or stove? Perhaps you are looking to save on heating costs for your home? Or maybe you're planning to surprise your children or grandchildren with movie or theme park tickets for the holidays?

Member Benefits offers a

host of endorsed discount & travel programs available to you, including:

- Buyer's Edge, Inc.
- Heat USA & Propane USA
- Working Advantage
- Car & Truck Rental Discounts
- Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals
- 1800Flowers.com
- Bose
- EPIC Hearing Service Plan
- OfficeMax Customer Perks
- Philips Lifeline Medical Alert Service
- Powell's Books

Make sure to check out the Member Benefits web-

site for a complete listing of endorsed programs & services available to you. If you haven't been to our site in a while, why not take the time to see what's new? And if you've never been to our site before, we encourage you to discover what you've been missing.

For more information about our endorsed programs & services, contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org).

For information about this program or about contractual endorsement arrangements with

providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

