

# NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

www.nysut.org | March/April 2018

# STICKING WITH OUR UNION

**WNY locals say: We're  
100 percent all in!  
Are you?**



**100% all in**  
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OUR VOICE, OUR VALUES  
**OUR UNION**

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THIS ISSUE OF NYSUT UNITED CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING CHANGES TO THE MEMBER BENEFITS PROGRAMS. YOU SHOULD READ AND RETAIN THIS ISSUE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

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## Meet School Me, NEA's new online tool for educators

School Me — [neatoday.org/schoolme](http://neatoday.org/schoolme) — is a new web-based resource from the National Education Association, one of NYSUT's national affiliates, to help new and early educators grow into seasoned professionals.

Blogs and podcasts feature real stories from educators, derived from their own unique experiences, and NEA resources provide advice on how to navigate this dynamic profession. School Me's DIY, social-friendly videos offer step-by-step visuals of how to create fun and quick classroom activities for students. Monthly webinars are designed to share resources and training on a variety of education topics.

School Me content is available via NEA Today's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, as well as on [www.neatoday.org](http://www.neatoday.org). You can also subscribe to the School Me podcast on iTunes.

If you or someone you know would like to become a contributor, encourage them to submit ideas to [newedsubmissions@nea.org](mailto:newedsubmissions@nea.org).

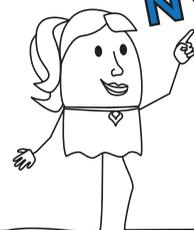
## Online seminar on disability awareness tailored to SRPs

NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust offers a new online seminar for School-Related Professionals who have important roles with students with disabilities and who might work closely with one student with severe disabilities or multiple students with less severe disabilities.



"Disability Awareness," ELT's three-hour online seminar, will help SRPs gain a general understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), characteristics of disabilities and key concepts related to the education of students with disabilities. The seminar is relevant whether an SRP works with students in the special education classroom, on the bus, in the cafeteria, on the playground, etc. Participants will refine their skills and knowledge by experiencing what it is like to have a disability and then apply this information as they identify strategies to improve student learning and behavior specific to the students they support.

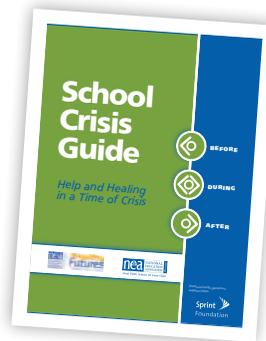
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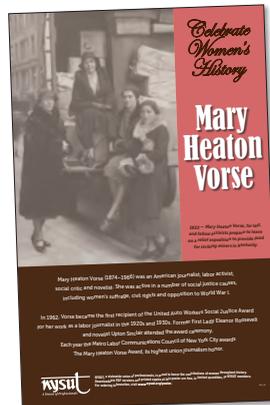
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## Helping students, educators heal after violence, tragedy strikes

The National Association of School Psychologists offers a variety of free resources to help students cope with traumatic events and national tragedies. They contain methods to help students who are continually hearing about senseless gun violence in or near schools and are scared about their safety. Visit [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org).



The National Education Association also has resources available for help and healing during times of crisis. The Healthy Futures School Crisis Guide is a step-by-step resource, created by educators for educators, that can make it easier for union leaders, school district administrators and principals to keep schools safe — before, during and after a crisis. Download the guide at <http://healthyfutures.nea.org/wpcproduct/school-crisis-guide/>.



## Women's history poster features Mary Heaton Vorse

NYSUT celebrates Women's History Month in March — with a free poster highlighting Mary Heaton Vorse (1874–1966) an American journalist, labor activist, social critic and novelist. She was active in a number of social justice causes, including women's suffrage, civil rights and opposition to World War I.

In 1962, Vorse became the first recipient of the United Auto Workers Social Justice Award for her work as a labor journalist in the 1920s and 1930s. Former First

Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and novelist Upton Sinclair attended the award ceremony.

Each year the Metro Labor Communications Council of

New York City awards *The Mary Heaton Vorse Award*, its highest honor for union journalism.

For print and downloadable PDF versions of this poster, and others, visit [www.nysut.org/posters](http://www.nysut.org/posters).



## COMING UP

### March 5–6

NYSUT Committee of 100 advocacy, state Capitol

### March 6

NYSUT Board Executive Committee meets, Albany

### March 9–11

Somos el Futuro Conference, Albany

### April 1

State budget due

### April 20

National Day of Action Against Gun Violence in Schools

### April 21

Professional Issues Forum on Health Care meets, Latham

### April 25

NYSUT Board Executive Committee meets, Buffalo

### April 25

NYSUT Board of Directors meets, Buffalo

### April 26

NYSUT Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference, Buffalo



### April 27–28

NYSUT Representative Assembly, Buffalo

## On the cover

From left, Lisa Gretz, Nicole Dopp and Rebecca Seelbinder, members of the Newfane TA.

Cover photo by Dennis Stierer.

Cover design by Dana Fournier.



DENNIS STIERER

# When '1-2-1' equals 100

## Members across the state say 'I'm sticking with our union'

By NED HOSKIN  
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

With *Janus v. AFSCME* — the largest threat to working people — now in the hands of nine U.S. Supreme Court justices, the growing voice of union members is undeniable — no matter the legal outcome, they're

sticking with our union.

The commitment to defy the relentless assault by anti-union agendas is evident in every corner of the state — from the thousands of union members who rallied in New York City and Buffalo for a Day of Action in late February to the union “ambassadors” who continue to engage their colleagues in meaningful conversations about union solidarity.

“Brothers and sisters we are at a crossroads where the billionaires are trying to tell us what to think and what to do,” NYSUT President Andy Pallotta told the crowd at the Day of Action in Mahattan’s Foley Square. “They think they are going to silence us. They are so wrong!”

The ambassadors’ “1-2-1” — one-to-one — conversations with members to build engage-



EL-WISE NOISETTE

■ NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, above, and Executive VP Jolene T. DiBrango, right, energize the crowd of unionists with messages of strength and solidarity at a Day of Action in Manhattan.



EL-WISE NOISETTE



DANA FOURNIER

■ Above: Proving that “1-2-1” conversations really work, every member of the Newfane Teachers Association in Western New York recommitted to their union.

ment are certainly proof.

In Western New York, all 134 members of the Newfane Teachers Association signed a new union membership card, renewing their commitment to their local, to NYSUT and to the labor movement.

“Here in Newfane, we have a strong union history, and our members know and value what the union does for them,” said Newfane TA President Henri Kursten.

The ambassadors quickly learned that “when you speak with members one-to-one, they want to take the time and they appreciate the chance to share their views,” he said.

Newfane’s neighbors and crosstown sports rivals in Wilson have done it, too. The 116-member Wilson TA, led by President Meg

■ From left: Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College’s Cynthia Eaton, left, joins NYSUT members, right, in Manhattan to mark the Working People’s Day of Action.



NYSUT’s Janus Action Page has many tools to help you spread the word. Visit [www.nysut.org/janus](http://www.nysut.org/janus) and share on social media with the hashtag [#ImStickingWithOurUnion](https://twitter.com/ImStickingWithOurUnion)

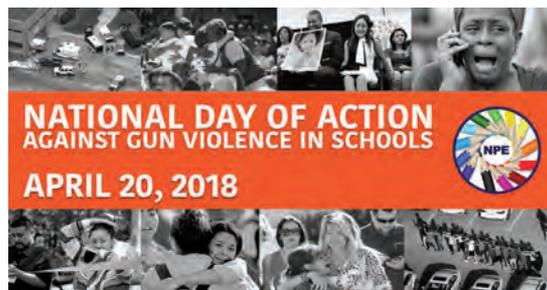
# Take action! Keep our schools safe

**T**he time to act is now.

NYSUT is joining its national affiliates — the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association — and the Network for Public Education for a National Day of Action Against Gun Violence in Schools on April 20 — the anniversary of the shootings at Columbine High School in 1999.

“We are united in our commitment to ensuring that every school is a sanctuary for teaching and learning, and is a safe, nurturing environment for all,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

Since Columbine, 136 students and educators have been killed in shootings at schools, including the 17 students and educators who were victims of the mass shooting in February at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.



Students, parents, educators and their supporters are wasting no time in making their feelings clear: schools must be safe learning environments. Candlelight vigils, rallies and school walk-ins are being planned for the Day of Action to send a strong message to state and federal lawmakers that their failure to enact rational gun laws is inexcusable.

Educators are also encouraged to wear orange on March 14 — the Women’s March has announced a National School Walkout. Students plan to walk out of their schools for 17 minutes to honor the lives lost in Parkland.

Students from around the country will converge on Washington, D.C. on March 24 to call for an end to gun violence against our students and educators on school campuses. NEA and AFT plan to provide support for the students.

You can also help the students, families, educators and staff at Stoneman Douglas High School and the surrounding school community by donating to AFT’s Disaster Relief Fund — [www.aft.org/broward-relief](http://www.aft.org/broward-relief). Your contribution will go directly to providing resources and support for the those affected by this recent tragedy in Florida.



DENNIS STIERER

Thompson, is 100 percent all in.

“The Western New York region has met the task of re-carding our membership with a swift and serious effort,” said Joe Najuch of Newfane, a member of the NYSUT Board of Directors. “There is no doubt that the training and workshops offered by the regional office, promoting the one-to-one conversations, have helped the Newfane and Wilson TAs achieve and preserve 100 percent membership.”

Their success is being repeated in every corner of the state. The Laurens TA and the South Kortright SRP unit in the Southern Tier recently reached 100 percent, as did the Little Flower

TA in Suffolk County on Long Island.

Is your local at 100 percent? Are you sticking with our union?

In addition to the efforts of the ambassadors, hundreds of union members stepped up last summer, in the fall, and this winter to join NYSUT’s Member Organizing Institute (MOI), a massive door-to-door, union-building activity that reaches members at home. Regional MOI trainings have drawn overflow crowds in Central New York, the North Country, the Hudson Valley and every borough of New York City.

“This is crucial work that connects members with the union in a very personal way,” said NYSUT Second

Vice President Paul Pecorale.

*Janus v. AFSCME* “is the latest in a series of attacks on our voice, our values and our union,” he said.

Essentially, the *Janus* case argues that people who personally benefit from union representation should not have to pay for it. As the transcripts of oral arguments confirm, the billionaires and corporate interests that are bankrolling the case are plotting to erode good wages, health benefits, employment and retirement security.

“What they are not counting on, however, is the strength of NYSUT members and union members everywhere,” Pecorale said. “We have the will and the power to defend and

■ The Wilson TA is “100 percent all in” after all 116 members recommitted to their union and signed their membership cards.

protect what’s ours.”

Busloads of unionists from the United University Professions and Professional Staff Congress, NYSUT’s higher ed affiliates, traveled through the night to demonstrate outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 26 when oral arguments in *Janus* were heard.

And a “thunderclap” of epic proportions reverberated throughout cyberspace at noon. The social media blitz generated thousands of tweets and messages simultaneously to millions of social media users. NYSUT connections alone reached more than *one million* friends and followers — an amazing demonstration of the power of our collective voice.

“This is the new reality for our movement, and it must continue,” Pallotta said. “We’re mobilizing to defend our rights. Unions are like a family and we stick together! ... Together, we have the power!”

# VOTE-COPE 2018: Continue our momentum

By Ned Hoskin  
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

In the spring of 2017, polls showed that many likely voters knew very little about the referendum mandated for that November on whether the state should hold a constitutional convention to rewrite its guiding document.

But the polls also showed that voters, by a 2-to-1 ratio, tended to say, “Sure, why not!?”

Only a massive grassroots education campaign by NYSUT members and what can only be described as a broad-spectrum coalition of unionists and social activists illuminated the dangers such a convention would pose.

Supported by VOTE-COPE, NYSUT’s voluntary political action fund, the momentum grew, the tide turned and the referendum was soundly defeated



when we all work together,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. “We

by more than a 4-to-1 ratio.

“It just shows what we can do

know that everyone in state government knows the labor movement made this happen, and we also know that NYSUT’s VOTE-COPE was key to this success story.”

The 2018 VOTE-COPE campaign calls on NYSUT members to carry on



our tradition of strength. Our future, like never before, is on the line.

In Washington, D.C., and in Albany, we face serious threats — to collective bargaining rights, to tenure, to pensions, and to Social Security and Medicare.

“Last year, you helped defeat a constitutional convention that threatened our futures,” Pallotta said. “You showed that when we stand together, we win.”

VOTE-COPE set a record, again, collecting more than \$10.7 million in voluntary donations in 2017, a 6.4 percent increase.

All eyes are on crucial midterm Congressional elections and state elections in November. And they are laser-focused on the U.S. Supreme Court as it weighs the fate of public sector unions in *Janus v. AFSCME*.

This year, our activism must be bold and decisive. We need to keep our tradition of strength, and the way to do that is through political action.

Let’s keep our tradition going.

## NYSUT endorses five in special state votes

NYSUT is backing five candidates in the upcoming April 24 special elections to fill vacancies in the state Legislature: Assembly members Shelley Mayer and Luis Sepúlveda for state Senate seats and Patrick Burke, Harvey Epstein and Ari Espinal for open Assembly seats.

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta praised Assemblyman Sepúlveda, who is seeking the 32nd Senate District seat in the Bronx, as a “friend of public education and labor.” Mayer, who currently represents Yonkers in the state Assembly, is the clear choice to fill the 37th Senate District seat vacated by George Latimer, he said.

“Shelley Mayer knows how to get things done in Albany. She combines a tremendous intellect with the ability to listen and act in the best interests of her community and the entire state,” Pallotta said. “Shelley has been a tireless advocate for public schools and colleges in Westchester County and a lifelong champion of working people.”

Burke, an adjunct professor at Buffalo State and a NYSUT member, is running for the 142nd Assembly District, which covers West Seneca, Orchard Park and slivers of Lackawanna and Buffalo.

“As a county legislator and community activist, Patrick Burke has

been a fighter for the working people in his district. We see him carrying to Albany that same passion and dedication for doing what’s right,” Pallotta said.

Epstein is a tenants’ rights attorney and community activist running for the 74th AD seat on the Lower East Side of Manhattan vacated by the election of Brian Kavanaugh to the state Senate. Espinal, a top aide to former Assemblyman Francisco Moya, is seeking Moya’s open 39th AD seat in Central Queens.

NYSUT’s endorsement carries significant weight. The union makes financial contributions from voluntary

donations to help candidates defray the cost of campaigns. Its extensive phone bank operation — staffed by volunteer political activists — will make tens of thousands of calls between now and the April 24 special election on behalf of endorsed candidates. NYSUT volunteers will also hand out campaign literature, attend rallies and lead a get-out-the-vote effort at the grassroots level, Pallotta added.

“Our members work for — and vote for — those candidates who support the issues they care about, including maintaining quality public schools, colleges and hospitals.”

# Our priorities

A state's budget is more than an annual spending plan: it's a statement of our values and priorities. Nothing is more important than to provide New Yorkers with the tools they need to thrive and succeed. That's why it is important for lawmakers to use the budget to declare decisively that education and health care are top priorities.

That's where we come in. We must make our voice and our values loud and clear. Go to NYSUT's Member Action Center – [mac.nysut.org](http://mac.nysut.org) – NOW and add your voice. Let's make sure lawmakers hear us and do the right thing.



MAC.NYSUT.ORG



## APPR

With changes in state standards and testing on the horizon, now is the time to make significant changes to New York State's teacher evaluation system. Teacher evaluations should be returned to local control with no state mandates. The overemphasis on testing has placed an unfair burden on students. Furthermore, changes in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act eliminates the mandate for testing in teacher evaluations. Teacher evaluations should be used for teacher support and development so students have the best teachers possible.

## Special education services

NYSUT opposes any proposal that would allow school districts, BOCES and private schools to petition the State Education Department for flexibility in complying with certain special education requirements. Such action would erode the quality of special ed and diminish the protections these critical resources provide in educating students with disabilities.



## Community schools

Community schools are closing the achievement gap; reducing chronic absenteeism, especially due to inadequate health care; reducing grade retention; reducing dropout rates; increasing graduation rates; and increasing student participation in after-school and summer programs. NYSUT urges the Legislature to maintain the \$150 million in existing community school funding and allocate the proposed new \$50 million in Categorical Aid. We also call for the continuation of \$75 million exclusively for struggling and persistently struggling schools.



## Specialty schools

Special Act, 853, 4201 and 4410 Schools provide unique and valuable services for students with all forms of disabilities. Additional funding for these schools is needed to maintain and expand services for students, and they should receive funding in keeping with surrounding traditional public school districts. **To learn more, watch our videos at [www.nysut.org/specialact](http://www.nysut.org/specialact).**



## SUNY and CUNY

PSC President Barbara Bowen, far left, and UUP President Fred Kowal, representing CUNY and SUNY faculty, respectively, tell lawmakers during a budget hearing that public higher education needs state investment to cover all mandatory costs, estimated to be \$300 million. The Legislature should reimburse campuses for tuition credits (\$65 million at SUNY; \$58 million at CUNY) to help free up funds for reinvestment in the classroom and for new classroom faculty.



## School aid

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, left, during a state budget hearing on K-12 school aid, strongly urges the Legislature to provide an increase of \$1.5 billion to schools to maintain current academic programs and services for students. An additional \$500 million in funding would support struggling schools, meet the needs of ELL students, ensure high-quality professional development, expanded access for college and career pathways and assist districts with growing enrollment. Public schools remain the best investment our state can make and the state must continue to provide the necessary funding to build on the progress that has been made, Pallotta said.

## Repeal receivership law

NYSUT calls for a repeal of the Receivership Law, and urges the state to support proven policies to increase student achievement by allowing struggling schools to use realistic, research-based tools, time frames and solutions to properly turn around these schools.



## Community colleges

NYSUT urges lawmakers to enact an increase of \$253 per full-time equivalent student. This would move the state closer to fulfilling its statutory obligation to provide 40 percent of operating costs to community colleges. The state should implement a multi-year plan to meet this funding obligation.



## SUNY hospitals

As New York braces for draconian changes and cuts to federal health care reimbursement, SUNY's hospitals must be supported and positioned to continue to provide care to all, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. NYSUT urges lawmakers to maintain the state subsidy to these teaching hospitals and keep them open as state public hospitals staffed by unionized public employees.

## Charter schools

NYSUT calls for the elimination of school districts' obligation to fund charter schools. This funding should be provided directly by the state. Districts should not be required to fund charter schools first and then wait for reimbursement by the state the following year. NYSUT also calls for critical reforms to make charter management operators more accountable.



## Student opportunity programs

NYSUT urges the Legislature to make a strong investment in student financial aid and opportunity programs. This includes updating the Tuition Assistance Program and enacting the DREAM Act.

## Increase revenue

NYSUT urges the Legislature to pass a progressive tax plan for the state's highest earners and on corporations, which would raise billions of dollars in new revenue annually to support public education, health care and infrastructure improvements. NYSUT also supports the proposal to treat carried interest, a tax loophole for hedge fund managers and private equity investors, as ordinary income for state tax purposes.



## Supports for educators

NYSUT strongly urges lawmakers to allocate \$40 million for teacher centers, the only state-funded vehicle that provides comprehensive, ongoing professional development and support services to educators and School-Related Professionals in all school districts. NYSUT requests funding for the Mentor Teacher Intern Program (MTIP) be increased to \$10 million to provide additional opportunities and support services for new educators. Likewise, funding to support National Board Certification, the highest credential in the teaching profession, should be increased to \$1 million to develop, retain and recognize accomplished educators.



## Career and Technical Education

The state should support and expand access to critical CTE programs in BOCES, component districts and the Big 5 school districts. NYSUT fully supports increasing the aidable salary for all CTE programs, including Special Services Aid in the Big 5 school districts since these districts have no ability to raise local revenue and therefore rely heavily on state funds.



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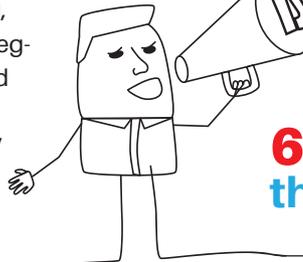
# Time to make voting in NYS easier, simpler

By Matt Smith  
msmith@nysutmail.org

**N**YSUT is urging the state Legislature to implement early voting and other initiatives that would make voting easier and increase turnout.

Let NY Vote — a campaign backed by labor unions, good-government, nonprofit, civil- and immigrant-rights, and clergy groups — wants lawmakers to adopt early voting and other poll-access initiatives as part of the 2018-19 state budget. More than three dozen states and the District of Columbia already have some form of early voting. The coalition says the state's outdated election rules are, at least in part, why only 29 percent of New York State's eligible population voted in the last statewide election.

"It's long past time for the state to make voting more convenient for New Yorkers through early voting, automatic registration and electronic poll books," said NYSUT



President Andy Pallotta. "New York should join the 37 other states that have already taken these steps — and others — to make the actual voting process simpler and easier."

So far the coalition has been successful — the nearly 20,000 petition signatures and editorial board support from the *New York Times* convinced Cuomo to add \$7 million in funding to his executive budget proposal. The aid would support the plan and help counties pay for opening polls early.

More than 100 activists holding signs that read "No One Should Have to Choose Between their Job and Their Vote" and "Vote Early — Save Democracy" recently rallied at the state Capitol in support of early voting, same-day registration and other measures to increase voter participation.

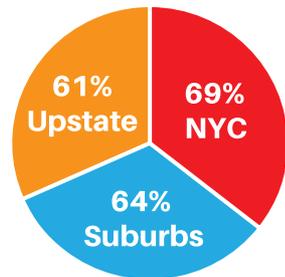
**YOUR VOICE IS YOUR VOICE**

**65% of all New Yorkers NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE think New York State should have early voting**



MATT SMITH

Advocates swarm the Million Dollar Staircase at the state Capitol to call on lawmakers to update the state's voter laws to allow early voting, among other reforms.



— Siena Research Institute poll, 2018

## Abraham elected Secretary-Treasurer

**J**. Philippe Abraham, NYSUT's first vice president, was elected to the office of secretary-treasurer on Feb. 9 in a special election held by the NYSUT Board of Directors to fill the vacancy left by Martin Messner. Messner resigned from the position in November.

As secretary-treasurer, Abraham will oversee the union's financial management. He will continue to lead NYSUT's social justice initiatives

as well as serve on the board of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust.

Installed as first vice president in April 2017, Abraham is NYSUT's first higher education member to serve as a statewide officer. Abraham is an at-large representative for higher education on the National Education Association's Board of Directors and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers. He came to NYSUT after serving for six years as the elected statewide vice president for professionals of United University Professions, which represents SUNY faculty and staff.

## Fraternity honors NYSUT officers



EL-WISE NOISETTE

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, left, and First Vice President/Secretary-Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham are honored by Alpha Phi Alpha during the NYS Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators caucus this winter.

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## WNY charter school union joins NYSUT

Educators at the Global Concepts Charter School in Lackawanna, seeking better pay and a voice in the day-to-day decisions that affect students and staff, have voted to unionize and affiliate with NYSUT.

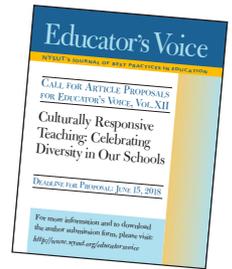
The 99 teachers and other professionals at Global Concepts voted overwhelmingly last year to organize and form a union — the Global Concepts Charter School Teachers Association. The NYSUT Board approved the affiliation request in February.

“Like so many workers, educators at this charter see the value in joining together in a union to collectively seek higher wages, better health insurance and improved working conditions,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. “NYSUT is looking forward to being a partner with Global Concepts’ educators — and the charter board — in improving conditions for teaching and learning, while also helping to stabilize operations at the school.”

Global Concepts is the ninth charter school in Western New York to be affiliated with NYSUT, which represents about three dozen charters statewide. Negotiations for a first contract are already underway.

## Educator’s Voice seeks proposals

Do you have a project or practice that works well in your classroom? Here’s an opportunity to write about it, and to become published in our member journal.



*Educator’s Voice*

is NYSUT’s Journal of Best Practices in Education. Published annually, it is created by our members for our members. We are currently seeking article proposals for the 2019 edition, “Culturally Responsive Teaching: Celebrating Diversity in Our Schools.” Go to [www.nysut.org/educatorsvoice](http://www.nysut.org/educatorsvoice) for information on how to submit a proposal.

To view past editions and watch videos featuring published members, visit [www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/educators-voice](http://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/educators-voice). Watch upcoming issues of *NYSUT United* for information on the 2018 edition, “Family Engagement and Community Partnerships.”



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A co-worker with a grudge lodges abuse complaints against an experienced special education teacher. Administrators want the teacher fired.

could  
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ever  
HAPPEN to  
**YOU?**



**A**s a member of a NYSUT local union, you are entitled to free legal representation from a NYSUT attorney should you ever face discipline or discharge. Here's how one member was helped. Any identifying information has been changed to protect the NYSUT member's identity.

### The background

Within a four-month period, education administrators brought two discipline cases against special education teacher Jane Smith. Though a co-worker was found to be an unreliable witness in the first case, administrators pursued a second case based on the same co-worker's complaint.

### The accusation — first case

For more than 20 years, Smith taught special education classes effectively at an elementary school. She never had any disciplinary issues. Then in 2016-17 Smith was assigned to work with a less-experienced teacher aide, who immediately exhibited a disrespectful attitude toward Smith and her proven ways of teaching.

The aide lodged a complaint against Smith, alleging she caused a crying student to hyperventilate and made abusive comments to the aide. Based on this complaint, administrators initiated Education Law § 3020-a charges against Smith seeking her termination.

### Due process — first case

A staff attorney in NYSUT's Office of General Counsel represented Smith in the 3020-a hearing. After hearing testimony from five witnesses, the hearing officer dismissed all charges against Smith.

One staff member who testified on Smith's behalf corroborated that Smith appropriately addressed the student's conduct. The hearing officer determined that this testimony refuted the aide's assertion that Smith

mishandled the situation. The hearing officer credited the testimony of Smith and her supporting witness — two trained educators with a history of interacting with the student — in concluding that they would not have subjected the student to an unsafe environment. Further, the hearing officer recognized that Smith followed written protocols for addressing this type of situation.

The hearing officer also found that a verbal exchange between Smith and the aide did not justify discipline. The hearing officer noted that the conversation did not disrupt the classroom environment and did not negatively impact any students.

### The second case

Four weeks after the first case was dismissed, administrators brought a second 3020-a case against Smith, seeking her termination for an alleged incident in the same school year. These charges alleged that Smith placed her hand over a student's mouth during an exam.

Another attorney in NYSUT's Office of General Counsel represented Smith at the second 3020-a hearing. A co-worker, who had testified in the first 3020-a case, claimed that Smith put her hand over the student's mouth when the student failed to respond to staff requests to read the exam silently in his head. The hearing officer found that the co-worker was not credible, based on her inconsistent statements and bias toward Smith. In comparison, the hearing officer found Smith to be extremely credible.

Smith testified that she first demonstrated the quiet sign on her lips and then used her pointer finger to demonstrate the sign on the student's lips. Smith explained that she used a visual sign because the student was a visual learner. Smith's account was corroborated by the student, who told investigators that Smith had put only one finger on his mouth to demonstrate a quiet sign.

Because of her rights as a union member, and her access to legal representation from NYSUT's legal team, Smith was completely exonerated and a terrible injustice was prevented.

### Post script

As a longtime leader in her union, Ms. Smith was aware of the possibility of disciplinary action, but it wasn't until she got a new principal did she begin to realize that the possibility was becoming a reality for her. She knew tenure meant due process and found her NYSUT attorneys to "be very knowledgeable and competent." In fact, she "felt confident that the union had chosen the best people to represent its members."

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# Recovery efforts continue in Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

## Locals, schools step up to answer the call

By Liza Frenette and Sylvia Saunders  
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

Local union members around the state are dreaming up creative ways to raise funds and send support to students, educators and families in hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

At Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES, teacher Jane Amorosi and teaching assistant Mary Moyles organized a fun “Pennies for Puerto Rico” event. The Saratoga Adirondack BOCES Employees Association recruited eight staff members and a student to grow beards during the month of January.

Students and staff voted for different beard styles by dropping loose change into jars labeled with photos depicting bearded faces. Whichever jar had the most money determined which beard style these men would get — mutton chops won.

Local barber Mike Rabbit of Main Street Barber donated his time — and students and staff paid \$1 each to watch the razor-sharp trimming. The effort raised nearly \$600 for the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund.

“This experience was a great community activity within our BOCES as well as a collaborative effort with NYSUT,” said Amorosi, a science teacher at the F. Donald Myers Education Center. “It reinforced social skills that students work on regularly, such as communicating appropriately, giving of their own time and demonstrating empathy and compassion for others.”

NYSUT First Vice President/Secretary-Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham, who oversees the



PHOTOS: MARIBETH MACICA

□ Jane Amorosi, a Saratoga Adirondack BOCES EA member, recruited staffers to grow beards for a “Pennies for Puerto Rico” fundraiser. At right, barber Mike Rabbit gives art teacher John Vandenberg mutton chops.

statewide union’s social justice efforts, said SABEA’s effort is one of many creative fundraisers organized by local unions around the state to help families and communities still reeling from last fall’s Hurricane Maria.

As of mid-February, NYSUT’s Disaster Relief Fund received more than \$122,000 in donations and disbursed funding to the American Red Cross, Americares and Operation Agua. Future funding will include solar chargers.

In the North Country, each of the 18 districts in St. Lawrence County — home of the NYSUT- and AFT-backed People Project — is developing ideas to help Puerto Rico, said Erin Covell, president of the Massena Federation of Teachers. She is working with former student Carlie Leary on projects to raise funds and spirits. One district plans a letter-writing effort for students to send warm wishes to their peers on the island.

The Massena FT will host dress down days through the end of the school year with proceeds going to Operation Agua, a program that brings water purification systems to Puerto Rican families and

communities. Several other local unions, including the United Federation of Teachers, Rochester TA and Wayland-Cohocton TA, are raising funds for the program.

Wayland-Cohocton TA President Lesley Doupe



said her district got involved after foreign language teachers started an International Club to help students learn more about different cultures.

“We are in a rural district so this helps students broaden their knowledge outside their small world,” Doupe said. After the devastating hurricane, students researched ways to help and decided to raise funds for Operation Agua. The union was happy to make a contribution to help the club reach its goal, Doupe said.

In Saranac Lake, Spanish teacher Lisa Kollmer, a building representative for the SLTA, put a fun — and educational — twist on an emergency supply collection drive. Her middle school students made a video — in Spanish

— explaining the most-needed items, from toothpaste to baby wipes. After the students recorded in front of a green screen, the video was finished with scenes of the devastated island. To see the video, visit <http://bit.ly/2ozysEP>. Other fundraising efforts around the state included a lip-sync battle between teams of teachers at PS 170 in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, that raised several thousand dollars, and an effort in the Bronx that received a thumbs-up retweet from award-winning playwright and actor Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Marybeth Whitehouse, a teacher at JHS 98, attracted Miranda’s attention when she posted a photo of her students who collected hundreds of dollars in mostly pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters.

Whitehouse, a UFT member, has made community service projects a major part of enrichment periods. Students did extensive research on Puerto Rico, creating a fact sheet and decorating buckets with the Puerto Rican flag.

Students also wrote about the experience, including one who wrote, “even when the government does nothing, we the people can still do something.”

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

The need is great, with thousands in Puerto Rico still without electricity, water and basic necessities. Visit [www.nysut.org/disaster-relief](http://www.nysut.org/disaster-relief) to donate online, or make your check payable to NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund and mail to NYSUT Headquarters, Attn. Disaster Relief, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110.



# Where's the truth?

**Amid a torrent of fake news, educators guide students on a quest for accuracy**



PHOTOS: LIZA FRENETTE

**By Liza Frenette**  
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

**F**ake news is designed to steer political opinion, foster dissent, incite racism, sell products and leave tawdry calling cards. These disguised nasty grams can change the course of elections, decisions impacting schools and government — even how you view your neighbor.

It's planted on social media and "news" sites, sometimes in subtle ways, or with the flourish of click-baiting headlines. It comes as advertorials in the guise of news-sponsored content, or links embedded in other stories to take the reader on a fact-starved ride.

"It's a tsunami of disinformation and propoganda," says Howard Schneider, the pioneering dean of the State University of New York at Stony Brook's School of Journalism.

Schneider, the former editor of *Newsday*, established the journalism school in 2006. While developing plans for the program, he was teaching an Ethics and Values of the American Press course. He soon

discovered the students were confused about the news.

One-third of his students tended to believe anything that said "news" on it. A third were cynical and didn't believe anything they read, and the other third was "totally confused" about the role of a true journalist.

"I was haunted by this class," Schneider says, concluding that news literacy needed to be a vital mainstay of the journalism program. "Transmitting, creating and consuming news had so profoundly been altered that we had to take on the second mission to train the audience."

Thus, Stony Brook's Center for News Literacy was born in 2007.

Learning how to examine news has payoffs beyond just establishing what is real and true, says Jonathan Anzalone, CNL's assistant director and a member of United University Professions, NYSUT's higher education affiliate representing SUNY faculty and staff.

"One of the collateral benefits is evidence-based critical thinking ... Judgments lead to actions," he says, noting that the decisions we make

Janis Schachter, a United Teachers of Northport member, left, teaches high school seniors how to examine news for verification, independence and accuracy.

and our ability to identify reliable information affects our own lives, and society as a whole.

"We rely on the news for everything, from 'Should I bring an umbrella today?' to 'Who should I vote for?'" he says.

Anzalone suggests his students — and everyone, for that matter — consume a "mixed news diet" of radio, print, online, video and TV. While students say the news is "bouncing off them," his tactic is to embolden them to pay attention to what they choose to watch or listen to, and why.

"We can't slow down the news cycle, we can slow down the way we think," Anzalone says. "The responsibility is on all of us to be critical, active citizens."

He introduces students to indirect evidence that can taint news: second-hand accounts; inferences; comments from a lawyer or press secretary. Direct evidence is video, audio or a photo; documents; records; journalistic and observer eyewitness accounts.

Janis Schachter, a United Teachers of Northport member who teaches news literacy to high school seniors, calls the fake news era a crisis for citizens of democracy. "To make decisions we need to find reliable information," she says.

Schachter's students answer questions about articles they've examined for verification, independence and accountability.

"We look at stories that turned out to be false, or partially false. We go

## Free classroom resources



The Center for News Literacy offers workshops for educators, including a summer literacy academy. For information, visit [www.centerfornewsliteracy.org](http://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org).

Free resources for teaching about news literacy are also available via the American Federation of Teachers at [sharemylesson.com](http://sharemylesson.com).

back and see what we should've noticed," Schachter says. Red flags include single-source stories, the reader's own bias or an unreliable author. Students learn how social media plays into their own biases, sending them "news" based on other items they have clicked on.

A former news reporter and copy editor, Schachter learned the craft of teaching news literacy at CNL.

"I just love it!" she says. "I'm putting my journalism and teaching together. Students are curious about the world and they want to understand it better."

Lesley Battaglia, a Williamsville Teachers Association member, uses materials from C-SPAN Classroom to educate AP Government students about news literacy. News bias had always been part of the class, but after the 2016 presidential election she decided to develop full lesson plans on news literacy.

"Suddenly 'fake media' was a term students were asking about," Battaglia says. Videos and lesson plans from C-SPAN Classroom examine topics such as satire, the effect of fake news on democracy, and the role of news organizations and social media. The site even has a lesson on media and the current administration, which often calls

unflattering, yet legitimate, news "fake."

"A main concern is that students just think they can Google a topic and the first thing they find is news-worthy," Battaglia says. She also has students examine the sources of the

There are scores of websites pretending to be something they are not.  
— Stanford University study, 2016

Twitter posts they commonly rely on.

The concerns teachers are uncovering are not unusual. A 2016 Stanford University study of students in middle school, high school and college concluded that "Overall, young people's ability to reason about information on the Internet can be summed up in one word: Bleak."

Many students failed to notice the difference between ads and news; and did not pursue the source providing the information, according to the study, *From History Assessments to Assessments of News Literacy*.

Many students were distracted and confused by ads and opinions.

"For every challenge facing this nation, there are scores of websites pretending to be something they are not," the Stanford study says.

Students in the study had to consider information on websites, home page analysis, news on Facebook, Twitter news, articles, comment sections, native advertising and news searches including opinion news. Student assessment skills often focused only on a strength or weakness of the news, but not both.

Both Schachter and Anzalone, at the start of their school years, require their students to undergo a complete news blackout.

The students soon realize it's impossible to totally escape the news. Schachter says the goal is to get them to understand how much news is pushed at them, and then learn to seek news that is reliable.

"If it's something you care about, you have to do a little work," she says. She teaches them to click on the "about" link to learn about the organization presenting information.

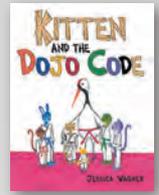
"I'm much more critical of what I'm reading," says Northport student Kaitlyn Cunningham, the editor of her school newspaper.

Educators hope many more students are exposed to that way of thinking, too. Schneider, the CNL's director, met with the state Board of Regents in mid-February to propose working with Regents to define the scope of the problem; make an inventory of existing programs underway by individual teachers around the state; consider regional workshops; and work together to fund demonstration projects for curriculum for students in grades as early as middle school.

The CNL says 10 states already have bills in their legislatures to mandate media literacy education.

Kitten and the Dojo Code

Written and Illustrated by Jessica Wagner



**Recommended by:** Tina Klar, instructional support specialist, New Hartford Teachers Association

**Suitable for:** grades K–5

**Why I chose it:** This book is a poetic narrative about a shy kitten who begins to learn karate, yet is doubtful about her ability to master it. The book explains the principles of karate, the dojo code: modesty, courtesy, integrity, self-control, perseverance and indomitable spirit.

**What I like best:** A main theme of the book is grit and perseverance. With the help of her teacher, the sensei, Kitten sees that through hard work, practice and determination she will master karate. Since we have all faced difficult situations, adults and children alike can connect with Kitten. The book also reinforces a sense of community as Kitten watches different animals at varying levels working to improve their skills. Wagner chose the animal characters carefully and used color themes to match the belt levels as the animals progress.

**How teachers can use this book:** This book is an excellent resource for teaching about growth mindset and determination. Students can reflect on how Kitten's feelings change from the beginning of the story to the end, and how the other animals help her see that she can achieve her goal. Students can share times when they felt nervous or unsure but were able to overcome their worries. Teachers can also use this book to teach poetry and writing traits, and work with students on how word choice affects meaning and voice.

**About the author:** Jessica Wagner has taught first grade in Williamsville for 15 years, and is a member of the Williamsville TA. She is a brown belt in Isshin-ryu Karate. Visit [www.jessicawagnerbooks.com/](http://www.jessicawagnerbooks.com/).

"Check it Out" features books recommended to teachers and parents by school librarians and other educators. Have a recommendation? Send suggestions, along with your name and local union, to [lfrenet@nysutmail.org](mailto:lfrenet@nysutmail.org).



Jonathan Anzalone, a UUP member and assistant director of SUNY Stony Brook's Center for News Literacy, shows students the elements of fake news and ways they can identify direct evidence of fact-based information.

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Mathematics/AYA

### GENEVA TA

**Rachel Gillotte**  
Mathematics/AYA

### \*GLENS FALLS TA

**Maureen Sara**  
English Language Arts/AYA

### GREAT NECK TA

**Matthew Blackstone**  
English Language Arts/AYA

**Theresa Walter**  
English Language Arts/EA

### GREECE TA

**Donna Timmons**  
Science/AYA

**Helen Kennedy**  
English as a New Language/EMC

### HADLEY LUZERNE TA

**Kathleen Maguire**  
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/  
EMC

### \*HAMBURG TA

**Sheri Green**  
World Languages/EAYA

**David Mancuso**  
Science/AYA

**JoAnn Thomasson**  
World Languages/EAYA

### HASTINGS TA

**Katherine Magnatta**  
Generalist/MC

### \*HUDSON FALLS TA

**Jody Suprenant**  
Science/AYA

### \*ITHACA TA

**Jane Koestler**  
Generalist/MC

### \*JAMESVILLE-DEWITT FA

**Amy Bissetta**  
Social Studies-History/EA  
**Wendy Newman**  
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/  
EMC

### \*JOHNSTOWN TA

**Katrina Bevington**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Melissa Livingstone**  
Generalist/EC

### \*LIVONIA TA

**Jenna Marcellus**  
English Language Arts/AYA

### \*MANHASSET EA

**Diana DiPaolo-Caputi**  
English Language Arts/AYA

**Loretta Schuellein-McGovern**  
English Language Arts/AYA

**Elizabeth Watts**  
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/  
EMC

### \*MIDDLEBURGH CTA

**Melinda Narzynski**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

### MOUNT VERNON TA

**Audrey Rome**  
Music/EAYA

### \*NISKAYUNA TA

**Christine Mathews**  
Generalist/EC

**Cindy Yetto**  
World Languages/EAYA

### \*NORTH SYRACUSE EA

**Zina Felt**  
Science/AYA

### \*OCEANSIDE FT

**Karen Flynn**  
Generalist/MC

**Amy Gigliobianco**  
Generalist/MC

**Jaclyn Goldstein**  
Generalist/MC

### \*PENN YAN EA

**Jeanette Simpson**  
Generalist/EC

### \*PITTSFORD DISTRICT TA

**Leslie Hanellin**  
Science/AYA

### \*PUTNAM VALLEY FT

**Robert Lathrop III**  
English Language Arts/AYA

### ROOSEVELT TA

**Ana Burgio**  
English as a New Language/EAYA

**Helen Hatem**

Generalist/EC

### SARANAC TA

**Rebecca Shuman**  
Science/EA

### \*SCHENECTADY FT

**Alyssa Sabbatino**  
English Language Arts/EA

### \*SHENENDEHOWA TA

**Sarah Halbig**  
Science/AYA

### \*SOLVAY TA

**Richard Gratien**  
Career and Technical Education/  
EAYA

**Amanda Phillips**  
Physical Education/EMC

### \*STILLWATER TA

**Amy Carpenter**  
Library Media/ECYA

**Julia Chesney**  
English Language Arts/AYA

### \*SYRACUSE TA

**Renee Valerino**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Suzanne Furcinito-Edwards**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Elizabeth Neeves**  
English Language Arts/EA

### TOMPKINS-SENECA-TIOGA BOCES

**Patricia Peterson**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

### UNIONDALE TA

**Salamah Adjoua-Mullen**  
Library Media/ECYA

### \*UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

**Angeline Anderton**  
Generalist/MC

**Nessa Arnold**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Meredith Byers**  
Social Studies-History/EA

**Matthew Campbell**  
English Language Arts/EA

**Chad Cinquegrana**  
Health Education/EAYA

**Emma Clerihew**  
Generalist/MC

**Alphonso Dance**  
English Language Arts/AYA

**William Deadwyler**  
Mathematics/EA

**Kimberly Elicker**  
Mathematics/AYA

**Nicole Feliciano**  
Social Studies-History/EA

**Sarah Fishstrom**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Masani Grayson**  
Science/EA

**Emn Haddad-Friedman**  
English Language Arts/AYA

**Joy Hines**  
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/

EMC

**Lindsay Horgan**  
World Languages/EAYA

**Jessica Kuhl**  
Science/EA

**Molly Layton**  
Social Studies-History/AYA

**Erica Lim**  
Social Studies-History/AYA

**Lindsey Mack**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Diana McGuigan**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

**Isis Monteza**  
English as a New Language/EAYA

**Robin Norwich**  
Mathematics/EA

**Ariel Prato**  
Mathematics/EA

**Karen Seylar Monaco**  
Mathematics/EA

**Millicent Starks**  
Generalist/MC

**Eleanor Vierling**  
Mathematics/AYA

**Jodi Wasserman**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

### UTICA TA

**Gregory Brockway**  
Music/EMC

**Melissa Williams**  
Generalist/EC

### \*VICTOR TA

**Lisa Whipple**  
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/  
EMC

### \*WAPPINGERS CT

**Jennifer Garrison**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

### WILLIAM FLOYD UT

**Gina Fumai**  
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

### \*WILLIAMSVILLE TA

**Todd Mitchell**  
English as a New Language/EAYA

**Unknown school district, subject**

**Andrew Kempe**  
Social Studies-History/AYA

**Michael Pershan**  
Mathematics/AYA

**Teresita Velez**

**AYA: Adolescence and Young  
Adulthood**

**EA: Early Adolescence**

**EAYA: Early Adolescence through  
Young Adulthood**

**EC: Early Childhood**

**ECYA: Early Childhood through  
Young Adulthood**

**EMC: Early and Middle Childhood**

**MC: Middle Childhood**

**\*NYSUT locals that have reported  
negotiated incentives for NBCTs**

# NYSUT congratulates the state's 118 new National Board Certified Teachers

By Sylvia Saunders  
ssaunder@nysutmail.org

For Uniondale school librarian Salamah Adjoua-Mullen, seeking National Board Certification was a journey that forced her to slow down and reflect on her practice.

"In education, everything is so rush, rush — often there's not even time to go to the bathroom," Adjoua-Mullen said. Working her way through the three-year national board process, Adjoua-Mullen said she learned to take a hard look at what she was doing, why she was doing it and how her practice was helping her students grow.

"It's a lot of questioning," she said. "At first, it drove me crazy ... But now I can't think any other way as I plan lessons and activities." Now in her 10th year as a school librarian, Adjoua-Mullen sees her work revolving around two core goals: "How do I get children to love reading? And how can we make learning fun?"

Adjoua-Mullen, who proudly brought her husband and daughter to a celebration of Long Island NBCTs, is one of 118 teachers statewide who earned National Board Certification in December 2017, plus an additional 31 educators who successfully renewed.

Created by teachers, for teachers, National Board Certification is the nation's highest credential for the teaching profession. It is a voluntary, rigorous, peer-reviewed process that includes a portfolio, student work samples and videos of classroom

teaching. Nationwide, the Class of 2017 included 5,470 new NBCTs, bringing the total to more than 118,000.

Looking back on the hundreds of hours she devoted to complete the four-component process, Adjoua-Mullen called her journey the ultimate professional development. "Instead of traditional P.D., where somebody is telling you how to do it, it's professional development that centers around you," she said. "You're learning for yourself the best ways to approach your teaching."

Pursuing National Board Certification is definitely introspective, but Adjoua-Mullen noted she didn't do it alone. Aside from having a supportive family, an NBCT candidate support group at nearby Roosevelt School District kept her on track. "We met once a month and the group really supported me anytime I had a question or felt stressed out. I had many mentors."

New York State now has nearly 2,000 NBCTs, with hundreds of districts offering a salary step increase, release time or a stipend for achievement. NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene



PHOTOS: ADELPHI UNIVERSITY

Uniondale TA's Salamah Adjoua-Mullen, above, is proudly pinned an NBCT. Below, from left: Great Neck TA's Theresa Walter is with her mentors Sarah Duke and Gigi Marasco, both Manhasset NBCTs, and Great Neck retiree Eileen Kurinskas, who started a teacher center program to help NBC candidates.



DiBrango said the union strongly supports national board candidates by offering awareness programs, support and advice through online discussion forums, writing retreats and professional development through its Education & Learning Trust. The union also works with teacher centers to support candidates.

In addition, NYSUT was instrumental in gaining the state's Albert Shanker Grant which covers costs for National Board Certification. The 2017 funding was exhausted in just 12 weeks, prompting both NYSUT and the State Education Department

to lobby for additional Shanker funding in the coming year.

Achieving National Board Certification can also be used to satisfy the state's new Continuing Teacher and Leader Education requirements, DiBrango noted. Through NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust and Empire State College, candidates can earn three graduate credits for each completed component for a total of 12 graduate credits. Each national board component will be one three-credit graduate course, costing only \$300 for members.

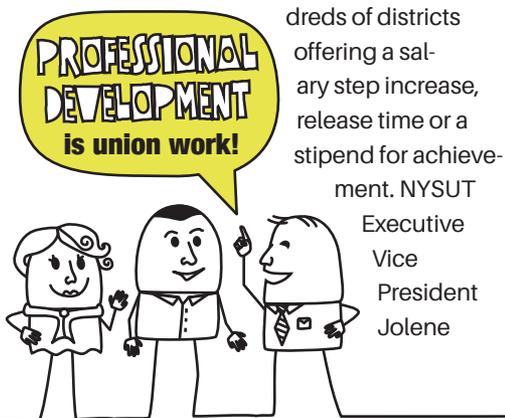
Now that the process is more flexible and allows more time, candidate numbers are dramatically increasing. Currently, nearly 700 candidates in New York State are in the NBCT pipeline, with the most in New York City, Yonkers, Schenectady, Manhasset and Croton-Harmon school districts.

After more than 20 years as a high school English teacher, Great Neck TA's Theresa Walter took on the national board challenge because she was looking to push herself. "I'm hoping it will open opportunities for me to take on teacher leadership roles and still stay in the classroom," she said.

Regent Roger Tilles, who attended the Long Island event at Adelphi University, congratulated the NBCTs. "I know how hard you've worked and how high the standards are," he said.

## Want to know more?

Teachers interested in pursuing National Board Certification can find resources online, including a support program, tips and a list of districts that offer incentives. Visit [www.nbcny.org](http://www.nbcny.org) or [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).



## 2018 List of Candidates

### NEA State Director —

#### Three-year term

Serena Kotch

### NEA Alternate State Director —

#### Three-year term

Lynn Garcia  
Sue Raichilson

### NEA State Director —

#### Unexpired, two-year term

Thomas McMahon  
Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan

### NEA Alternate State Director —

#### Unexpired, two-year term

Dora Leland

### NEA State Delegates/Alternate State Delegates

J. Philippe Abraham  
Lisa Beckerink  
Rowena Blackman-Stroud  
Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes  
Rachel Binda-Lis  
Gweldolyn M. Brown  
Thomas Brown  
Jolene DiBrango

Selina Durio  
Lynn M. Garcia  
Anne Goldman  
Sophia Howard-Johnson  
Dora Leland  
Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan  
Andrea McCue  
Jeriluanne O'Bryan-Losee  
Christine O'Callaghan  
Paul Pecorale  
Debra Poulos  
Sue Raichilson  
Kathleen E. Roach  
Andy Sako  
Chris Salamone  
Howard Schoor  
Cathy Stearns  
Jo Ann Sweat  
Ruyvette Townsend

### NEA Retired Delegates

Lynn N. Diagostino  
Carol J. (Brancato) Marshall  
Christine E. Nowak  
Stanley J. Nowak  
Art Parks  
Sara Rodland

## 2018 Candidate Statements

### CANDIDATES FOR ELECTED POSITIONS HAVE THE OPTION TO SUBMIT STATEMENTS.

### NEA STATE DIRECTOR — Three-year term

#### SERENA KOTCH Cleveland Hill Education Association



I have 14-plus years of experience in lobbying, political action and NYSUT leadership. I have enthusiastically served a year as an NEA Alternate Director and as an Interim Director since May of 2017. I am fully trained and ready to continue serving NYSUT/NEA in the position of NEA State Director.

### NEA STATE DIRECTOR — Unexpired, two-year term

#### MELINDA MacPHERSON-SULLIVAN Buffalo Teachers Federation

I have been a member of NEA for 25-plus years. The battles go on. I have served as Delegate to the NEA, AFT, member of the merged Board of Directors, Delegate NYSUT, Teacher Center Director, Secretary Buffalo Teachers Federation. I thank you in advance for your support. Vote Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan.

### NEA STATE DELEGATES

#### MELINDA MacPHERSON-SULLIVAN Buffalo Teachers Federation

\* See statement above

#### ANDREA McCUE Haldane Faculty Association



Andrea McCue is a Special Education teacher and Department Chair in the Haldane Central School District, Putnam County. A member organizer for NYSUT's Education Autumn, McCue is the President of the Haldane Faculty Association and is a 2016 NYSUT Leadership Institute graduate. She also attended the NEA's 2018 Leadership Summit.

### NEA RETIRED DELEGATES CAROL J. (BRANCATO) MARSHALL Retiree Council 44



I want to thank all those who have voted for me throughout the years enabling me to represent you at the NEA/RA before and after my retirement.

Your vote this year will ensure my joining NEA-R's fight for the rights of both retired and active teachers.

#### CHRISTINE E. NOWAK Retiree Council 44



+ Secretary and Board Member to NYSUT Retiree Council 44  
+ Member of RC 44 By-Law Committee  
+ NEA Educators for Life

Caucus National Chairperson  
+ Member of the Buffalo Teachers Federation Executive Committee for 18 years  
+ NEA RA delegate and Retiree delegate for 43 years  
+ NEA member

#### STANLEY J. NOWAK Retiree Council 44

+ Past President of NYSUT Retiree Council No. 44  
+ Member of the NYSUT Retiree Advisory Committee  
+ Retiree member of the NYSUT Board of Directors

#### ART PARKS Retiree Council 44



As an insightful leader of Retirees recently warned: "Retirees be vigilant!" An I.O.U. is not a good replacement for actual retiree monies invested in healthy portfolios and local contract negotiations that protect retiree pensions! Watchdogging is a crucial obligation of your elected retiree representative! Art Parks is that watchdog.

#### SARA RODLAND Retiree Council 44

I am an experienced, active and committed leader who would be privileged to continue representing YOU at the NEA Representative Assembly. I am committed to working together with you to preserve and improve benefits for retirees. VOTE FOR SARA RODLAND.

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## Proposed Constitutional Amendments

### PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT #1

SUBMITTED BY THE NYSUT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTE: Strike-throughs indicate deletions.

Applicable Constitution or Bylaws Article and Section numbers: Article VII, Section 1 and Section 4

#### Article VII: Officers

Lines 208-210

1. The officers of NYSUT shall be a President, Executive Vice President, ~~First and~~ Second Vice Presidents and a Secretary-Treasurer.

Lines 280-286

4. The duties of the Vice Presidents, in order of rank as follows: Executive Vice President, ~~First Vice President~~, Second Vice President, shall be to assume the duties and responsibilities of the President in his/her absence and to perform such duties as the President may designate.

### PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT #2

SUBMITTED BY THE NYSUT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTE: Strike-throughs indicate deletions. Red indicates additions.

#### Article VI – Dues

1. The dues for inservice members on a monthly<sup>+</sup> basis shall be the following, plus the current AFT/NEA per capita for inservice membership in accordance with the NEAFT national affiliate dues agreement. Equivalent agency fee amounts should be collected on the same schedule.

<sup>+</sup> Locals paid on a 10-month basis shall follow the 10-month salary schedule. Locals paid on a 12-month basis may follow the 12-month salary schedule. Unless otherwise specified, all dues changes commence on September 1.

#### LOCALS ON 10-MONTH SCHEDULE

Annual Salary	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
\$8,499	\$4.60	\$4.73	\$4.73	\$4.73
\$8,500 to \$16,999	\$9.20	\$9.45	\$9.45	\$9.45
\$17,000 to \$25,499	\$18.40	\$18.90	\$18.90	\$18.90
\$25,500 to \$33,999	\$27.60	\$28.35	\$28.35	\$28.35
\$34,000 up	\$36.80	\$37.80	\$37.80	\$37.80

#### LOCALS ON 12-MONTH SCHEDULE

Annual Salary	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
\$8,499	\$3.83	\$3.94	\$3.94	\$3.94
\$8,500 to \$16,999	\$7.67	\$7.88	\$7.88	\$7.88
\$17,000 to \$25,499	\$15.33	\$15.75	\$15.75	\$15.75
\$25,500 to \$33,999	\$23.00	\$23.63	\$23.63	\$23.63
\$34,000 up	\$30.67	\$31.50	\$31.50	\$31.50

2. Dues for Retired Members, Employees on Unpaid Leave, Laid-off Employees, NYSUT Staff, and Students shall be determined by the Board of Directors with the approval of the Representative Assembly.

3. All locals of NYSUT are obligated to transmit per capita dues and equivalent agency fee amount to NYSUT as long as NYSUT is obligated to pay the dues and equivalent agency fee amount to any national affiliate.

4. At-large members and affiliated locals within units where the bargaining rights have been won by other member organizations and where such other organizations have obtained an agency shop clause in the contract, shall pay per capita at one-fourth the regular rate whenever those at-large members of a local's members are required to pay agency fees to another organization.

5. The Board of Directors may set alternative dues and service structures which can be used for unique constituency groups which are organized by the union. Such structures may be reviewed at the following Representative Assembly.

## RA delegates to weigh critical issues to preserve union's voice, values

More than 1,500 delegates representing NYSUT members throughout New York State will gather in Buffalo to set the course of the union's future and strengthen its vibrant role in the labor movement.

"We are facing unprecedented threats from wealthy special interests fighting to destroy our unions and the things we value. They've funded *Janus v. AFSCME*, a case before the U.S. Supreme Court that poses a direct threat to our voice, our values and our union," NYSUT President Andy Pallotta writes in a letter to delegates to the 2018 Representative Assembly.

Delegates will consider more than 40 resolutions that will direct the union to take actions that "will help preserve the strength of our union and the labor movement in New York," Pallotta says.

NYSUT's goal is to have 100 percent representation at the RA so every member's voice is heard. Delegates will also elect delegates and alternates to the National Education Association RA, and two NEA State Directors and two Alternate NEA State Directors.

Guest speakers so far include Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten. NYSUT officers will also address delegates.

Delegates, too, will recognize NYSUT members for excellence in their professions. This year's honorees are:

■ Christopher Albrecht, Brockport Teachers Association, 2018 NYS Teacher of the Year.

■ Margaret Dalton-Diakite,

United Federation of Teachers and Stephen Rechner, Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff (UCATS), School-Related Professionals Members of the Year.

■ Mildred Glaberman, UFT, and Mel Stern, Retiree Council 20, Retiree Members of the Year.

■ Alicia Schwartz, UFT, Health Care Professional Member of the Year.

■ Bethany Gizzi, Faculty Association of Monroe County Community College,

and Cynthia Eaton Tvelia,

Faculty Association of Suffolk County Community College, Higher Education Members of the Year.

"Not for Ourselves Alone:" The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award, recognizing lifetime achievement, will be presented to Anne Goldman, UFT, and Nadia Resnikoff, Middle Country Teachers Association, Inc.

Lori Griffin, Copenhagen TA, will receive the Sandy Feldman Leadership Grant. Additionally, the Ken Kurzweil Social Justice Recognition Awards and the Community Service Award recipients will also be honored.

### RA elections

The 2018 NYSUT Notice of Nomination and Election Campaign and Elections Procedures was published in the January/February issue of *NYSUT United* (pages 19-21).

Certified candidates can issue statements for publication, at no cost, in *NYSUT United* (see page 18). *NYSUT United* does not alter or edit the statements in any way. However, statements are subject to strict word limits depending on the office or position.

Voting takes place on April 27 at the RA. Check [www.nysut.org/RA](http://www.nysut.org/RA) for results and other updates.



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## 5

QUESTIONS for ...

**Cathy McKeown**

United Center Employees Association

**C**athy McKeown is an occupational therapist at the Children's Center at UCP (United Cerebral Palsy), a special education school in Commack for children from birth to age 21.

**1. The Children's Center at UCP in Commack, and other 853 Schools across the state, play a special role in New York's educational landscape. Why are 853 Schools so important?**

These schools serve students with disabilities. Many of the students in my school have complex physical and medical needs and cannot have their educational needs met in a mainstream school environment. Schools like UCP play an important role in caring for students with complex and intense needs because we have the staff, equipment and expertise to help these students thrive.

When visitors come to our school, whether it's someone from the child's home school district, a community member looking to volunteer, or even a politician, they are often surprised at how we work with these children. For the parents of our students, it might be the only time they are around children who may have the same challenges as their own child. I believe that breaks the barriers of isolation they may feel. We provide support and understanding to the parents of the children who come to our school.

**2. Employees at 853 Schools confront unique challenges. How has your union helped its members meet those challenges?**

Most 853 Schools are part of nonprofit organizations that depend heavily on federal and state funding.

The employees in 853 Schools do not enjoy pensions, or the salaries those working in a school district would receive. These schools also tend to be smaller. The union advocates for higher salaries. NYSUT also holds special workshops on safety and political advocacy that have helped increase awareness of when our agencies get their funding so we can negotiate for our fair share. Many 853 Schools receive only small increases in funding that often do not keep up with the high cost of programs. This affects what we can do for these special children, and impacts our salaries. I am not sure our state legislators fully understand what we do, and that is why it's important to have NYSUT advocate for our schools.

**3. Not all educators at 853 Schools are organized. What would union representation bring to those workers?**

Being organized, you have a voice. Having a union on your side is essential when advocating for a living wage. Also, there are unique safety issues that stem from the type of physical work that is done, and there are safety issues that can stem from being short-staffed, too. The union can hold the agency accountable. For example, I went to one NYSUT workshop on making sure the physical environment of my school is on par, and learned what can be done if someone gets hurt.

**4. What was the evolution of your own unionism and increased involvement?**

I was really growing weary of working



short-staffed, and working with an unrealistically large caseload. I wanted to improve my wages. I wanted to be a part of the process of negotiating the best contract. I think it's important to be involved and let your voice be heard. Just paying union dues and expecting things to happen was not working for me.

**5. You've met with state lawmakers and advocated for Special Act and 853 Schools. What must Albany do to ensure that Special Act and 853 Schools are able to fulfill their mission successfully?**

When I went to the Committee of 100, I felt the legislators had a good idea of the needs of school districts for "regular" education, but had no idea what schools for students with profound needs do. The state's special education 853 Schools need to be just as well-funded as traditional schools. Kids attending 853 Schools need more specialized care and equipment, and that does not come cheaply. The staffers who work at these schools are dedicated, but they often hold other jobs just to get by. In some cases, 853 Schools can provide support to preschoolers with developmental delays and provide early intervention. That may save the school district money later on. I would say to lawmakers: Don't forget about schools for children with disabilities. We are in your communities.

**It's an honor**

**Melissa Salguero**, United Federation of Teachers, was honored as the 2018 GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year. Salguero won a \$10,000 honorarium and a matching \$10,000 grant for her school. For more, visit [www.nysut.org/news/2018/january/grammy-winner-remembers-her-favorite-teacher](http://www.nysut.org/news/2018/january/grammy-winner-remembers-her-favorite-teacher).

Teachers **Tim Evans** and **Alex Bell**, both UFT members, won the Brooklyn Nets Teacher Excellence Award. The monthly award recognizes "exceptional teachers for their commitment toward students and education." Evans, a global studies teacher, was the honoree for the month of November 2017. Bell, a Career and Technical Education teacher, was the December 2017 honoree.

**Patricia Summers**, a retired member of United Teachers of Northport, started Friends of America's Vet Dogs with a group of friends to raise funds and provide service animals for returning veterans. In three years, the group has raised \$60,000, sponsored 10 puppies, and run dozens of local events. Visit [www.nysut.org/itswhatwedo](http://www.nysut.org/itswhatwedo) for more info.

**In print**

**Len Martin**, Gloversville Teachers Association, and Jerry Evensky have published *Economics for NYS High School Students*, a textbook for the 12th grade economics course. Information is available at [www.regentsecon.com](http://www.regentsecon.com).

**Donald Tedesco**, Mamaroneck TA retiree, has written *Actionville*. The title is based on a program he instituted for students involving creative learning, field trips, guest speakers and parent buy-in. Visit <http://dontedesco.com>.

"Kudos!" recognizes the accomplishments of NYSUT members. Have good news you'd like to share? Email [united@nysutmail.org](mailto:united@nysutmail.org); include "Kudos!" in the subject line.

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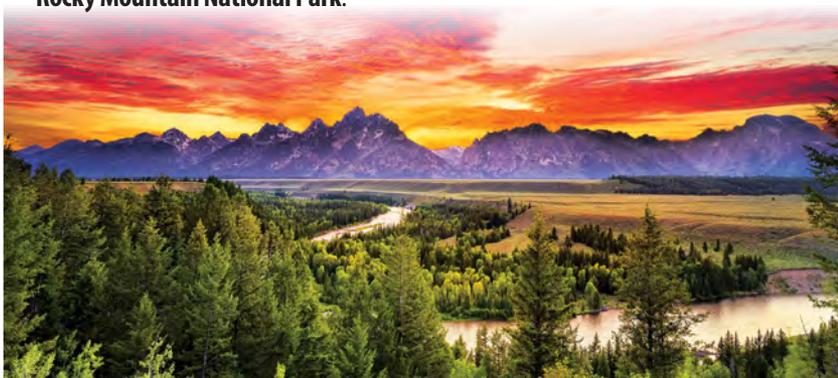
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# The **VIOLENCE** factor

By Liza Frenette  
lfrenett@nysutmail.org

**A** local union member pulls into the parking lot of the Syracuse Teachers Association union headquarters. It is 5 p.m. on a late fall weekday and already darkness is in command. He gets out of his car, takes a few steps, gets back in his car, and waits.

He works as a school sentry. It's his job to maintain order and protect the well-being of students and educators. He didn't expect to be so shaken by the school violence he sees.

He gets out of the car again. Should he go in? Or just go home? He goes in — to the inaugural gathering of a newly minted Work Support Group for STA members who've been affected by student bullying, violence and physical harm. He knows he needs support and he's not alone: 57 percent of Syracuse TA members say they have been threatened by disruptive students; 36 percent say they have been physically assaulted, according to a 2016 survey. Most assaults take place in classrooms. One in five respondents say they experience psychological trauma.

"I knew how bad it was in my building, but I didn't realize it was pervasive in other buildings," says Bill Scott, a social worker who is a vice president of the 3,000-member STA.

A 2018 survey of Buffalo Teachers Federation members shows similar trends of disruptive behavior by students.

More than 30 percent of Buffalo

## Unions offer educators support, seek solutions for disruptive student behavior

teachers say disruptive student behavior is out of control, according to the survey ([www.btfny.org/press/disruptive\\_behavior\\_results\\_2018.pdf](http://www.btfny.org/press/disruptive_behavior_results_2018.pdf)). The 3,800-member BTF has since passed a resolution seeking to establish a standing Teaching and Learning Environment Committee made up of parents, teachers and administrators to find solutions.

BTF President Phil Rumore says the survey "is cause for great concern ... Everyone should be shocked and concerned with the results and teacher statements." He commissioned the survey after asking about 150 building representatives if disruptive behavior is a problem. "Almost every hand went up," he says.

In Syracuse, Scott formed the support group to help educators after the union joined NYSUT's Local Action Project, a three-year program for local unions to improve their internal and external communication and community outreach. The STA survey was completed by NYSUT's Research and Educational Services department.

"There are things we need to do as a union," he says, things like ensuring a safe working environment and addressing the emotional needs of

teachers, who tend to work in isolation within their classrooms.

"Working in a building where there are perpetual crises can

take a toll. Our bodies are not wired for constant stress. Emotional wear and tear is cumulative ... I don't know if there is anyone acknowledging that for teachers," Scott says.

Teachers, he says, are known to take medical leaves because of mental and/or physical impacts of violence. Last year a substitute teacher was stabbed three times while trying to break up a student fight.

Scott's new, no-cost, unionwide group began meeting monthly in October and now convenes every two weeks at members' request. It's a place for members to share grief and pain, and to learn. Topics include getting to know the student population and what it means to work with a traumatized child. Another session focused on how stress causes depression and anxiety and can determine how/why your body responds in

certain situations. Members learn healthy coping mechanisms and strategies for self care and bring up subjects they need to talk about.

Scott believes the district "set the bar really low" in allowing poor behavior to continue in order to avoid reporting suspensions or having certain schools listed as "persistently dangerous" by the state.

Similarly, more than 80 percent of the BTF survey respondents believe disciplinary actions and suspensions are inconsistent and underreported in the city's schools.

Meanwhile, in both cities, disruptive students are not getting the support and intervention they need. Resources are spread thin and schools have too few social workers, counselors and psychologists for students.

"The earlier we start identifying students and families in crisis, the better chance we have of correcting disruptive behavior," Rumore says. "If the problem is not solved soon, the issues will increase in frequency and severity. There is no one answer to this."



PROVIDED

■ Syracuse social worker Bill Scott leads a support group twice a month for members of the Syracuse Teachers Association affected by student violence in schools. The support is provided as a free union service to members.





Alma Cormican, 2017 NYSUT Retiree Member of the Year and past president of the White Plains Teachers

Association, died Feb. 2.

Cormican, who taught for nearly four decades, served the White Plains TA in a number of capacities, including president and chief negotiator. She remained a union activist after retiring in 1999. She edited her retiree local's award-winning newsletter; organized pre-retirement seminars for in-service teachers; and raised more than \$15,000 for local scholarships and to help schools and children in need.

"Alma meant so much to so many people. She led our retiree council to unprecedented levels of participation through political, social and humanitarian campaigns," said NYSUT At-Large ED 51-53 Director Florence McCue. "Any time the union needed something, she was the first one to step forward not only to help, but to lead us to join her."

**Julie M. Bowe** | Nov. 9, 2017  
Retiree Council 9

**Irene B. Dunlap** | Dec. 23, 2017  
Retiree Council 18

**Mary Paddock** | Dec. 27, 2017  
Retiree Council 7

**Shelia M. Sorge** | Dec. 23, 2017  
Gateway Teachers Association

*Full obituaries, if provided, are available at [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org). Submissions must include decedent's full name, union affiliation and date of death, and contact information for the person submitting the notice. Fax notices to 518-213-6415; send to Julie Bull, NYSUT United, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455; or email [jbull@nysutmail.org](mailto:jbull@nysutmail.org).*

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### HELP WANTED

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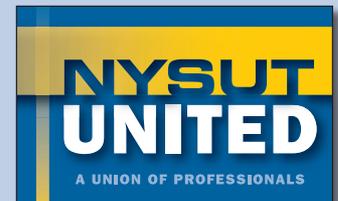
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### NYSUT audit notice

NYSUT continues its practice of providing members with access to the union's certified audit for their review. The annual audit for the fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2017, is available and can be found on the NYSUT Member Center at [www.nysut.org/](http://www.nysut.org/) **audit**. Members may request a hard copy by contacting the NYSUT Accounting Department at 518-213-6000, ext. 6252, or by sending an email to [finance@nysutmail.org](mailto:finance@nysutmail.org).

# Getting to know ... Bruce Zeller

Bruce Zeller is a microcomputer repair technician at the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District. He was interviewed by Jill Ackerman, acting president of the Kenmore-Tonawanda School Employees Association and a member of NYSUT's SRP Advisory Committee.

## Tell us about your job and why you love what you do.

I enjoy the daily challenges of being a computer repair tech and the satisfaction when all systems function correctly. Each day is something different and a new set of challenges. I handle anything, from installing backbone infrastructure to end user equipment, including desktops and projection and sound equipment. I enjoy the contact with all levels, from the staff, students and administration to solve problems.

## How are you involved with your union?

I feel it is important to make people aware of the

issues that involve our daily work lives. The union is the best way to contact people with similar interests and concerns. It is very special to be able to discuss these issues to get various points of view that pertain to the many and varied groups that make up our union and then be able to come to a consensus decision that benefits us all.

## How do you make a difference?

No matter what the situation, I feel that I am a positive influence on everyone I contact each day. I am able to solve problems and leave people with a smile on their face.

## Tell us about your community engagement, hobbies.

I enjoy farming, spending time with my family and friends as well as working on home repairs and projects. I am the president of our church congregation and a former fireman.



PROVIDED

## NYSUT celebrates School-Related Professionals Day winner



PROVIDED

The Peekskill Faculty Association, led by Jose Fernandez, celebrates the district's School-Related Professionals with displays and breakfast pastries on SRP Recognition Day in November. The effort earned the FA first place in NYSUT's SRP Recognition Day contest. Two members can now attend NYSUT's 2018 SRP Conference for the price of one.



EL-WISE NOISETTE

■ NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale meets recently with members of the union's School-Related Professionals Advisory Committee at NYSUT headquarters in Latham. The committee advises NYSUT about the issues important to the statewide union's 91,000 SRP members, including professional development, communications, political action and workplace safety. Committee members are appointed by the NYSUT president based on recommendations made by election district directors. They serve three-year terms.

**Regional conferences**

- **RC 12: May 8, Glen Sanders Mansion, Scotia.**  
*Retiree Services Consultant: Jennifer Shaad-Derby*
- **RC 4, 46: May 15, Seneca Allegany Event & Conference Center, Salamanca.**  
*Retiree Services Consultant: Louise Ortman*
- **RC 1, 2, 3, 44: May 16, Millenium Buffalo.**  
*Retiree Services Consultant: Tracy Beatty*
- **RC 7, 8: May 21, Doubletree, East Syracuse.**  
*Retiree Services Consultant: Anne Marie Voutsinas*
- **RC 11, 45: May 23, TBA.**  
*Retiree Services Consultant: Mark Padgett*



PROVIDED

■ NYSUT First Vice President/ Secretary-Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham; Florence McCue, NYSUT at-large ED 51-53 director; and Terrence Melvin, NYS AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, at the NYS AFL-CIO holiday reception in New York City.

■ Joan Perrini, RC 21; Deb Peterson, RC 43 president; and Jeanette Stapley, RC 9, show their union pride during the NYSUT Women's Committee meeting in December.

**Tell us your union story**

Are you a NYSUT retiree who was active in your profession before you became a union member?

If so, we want to hear your story.

With the Janus case looming in the U.S. Supreme Court, our union rights are under attack like never before. What was your work-place experience like before the union?

Share your thoughts at the Janus Action Center. Visit [www.nysut.org/janus](http://www.nysut.org/janus) and click on "Tell it."



PROVIDED

**Did you know?**

NYSUT Retiree Services consultants are resources for retired members, retiree councils and in-service locals on NYSUT retiree matters.

**Tracy Beatty**, RC 1, 2, 3, 44  
716-634-7132

**Louise Ortman**, RC 4, 46  
716-664-7425

**Peter Randazzo**, RC 5, 6  
585-454-5550

**Anne Marie Voutsinas**, RC 7, 8  
315-431-4040

**Jeanette Stapley**, RC 9, 10  
518-783-7977

**Mark Padgett**, RC 11, 45  
607-786-5742

**Jennifer Shaad-Derby**, RC 12, 13  
518-783-7977

**Ellen Pincus**, RC 14, 15-16  
914-592-4411

**TBD**, RC 17, 18, 19  
516-496-2035

**Joan Perrini**, RC 20, 21, 22, 23  
631-273-8822

**Judy D. Kalb**, RC 43  
561-994-4929, ext. 129

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PHOTOS PROVIDED

## East Irondequoit Teachers Association

Members of the East Irondequoit TA, led by Kimberly Messmer and Timothy Scheg, raised more than \$3,200 for the Irondequoit Community Cupboard, an organization that helps hundreds of families in East Irondequoit.

The local sponsored a charity basketball game between union

members and the Irondequoit Police Department. The event also featured a silent auction with baskets and items donated by East Irondequoit TA members, members from other staff

members and the Irondequoit Police Department. The event also featured a silent auction with baskets and items donated by East Irondequoit TA members, members from other staff



unions and administrators in the district. The successful event was a team effort with students, staff and the community chipping in throughout the day. Students sang the national anthem, cheered on the basketball players and provided half-time entertainment.

## North Rockland Teachers Association

Each year, the North Rockland TA presents 12 graduating seniors with \$1,000 scholarships. This year, the local hopes to raise enough money to award 15 scholarships. Seniors write an essay describing an NRTA member who has made an impact on their life. Scholarships are presented at an NRTA Scholarship Tea and each senior invites the union member who inspired them to the event. The North Rockland TA, led by Debra Brennan, also hosts events throughout the year to support the community.

## Sayville Teachers Association

The Sayville TA, led by Michael

Pace, kicked off the new year with a challenge to help members keep their resolutions. During the month of January, the union sponsored a three-week "Step Challenge" for all district employees to "work off those holiday indulgences."

The local enticed participants with the chance to win one of two \$50 gift cards, one for those who finished in the top 10 for total steps, and one for competitors who logged at least 10,000 steps for each of the 21 days.

## Pembroke Teachers Federation

The seventh annual Pembroke Shooting For A Cure! was a massive success, thanks in part to volunteers including members of the Pembroke TF. The event, hosted by the Pembroke girls' basketball team, raised more than \$23,000 to raise awareness and money for cancer research in conjunction with the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo.

Pembroke TF members sold raffle tickets and apparel, worked the concession stand and helped organize the event.



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From left, Pembroke Teachers Federation members Ron Funke, President Greg Kinal, Mike Wilson and Arron K. Brown help raise funds for cancer research.

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## 2018 Summary of Material Modifications

### NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary of Material Modifications And Notice to Participants (Plan No: 503; I.D. No.: 22-2480854)

Dated: March 2018

Dear Participant:

The following is a summary of important changes made to endorsed benefit programs since the publication of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description in March 2016 and the subsequent NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary of Material Modifications and Notice to Participants dated March 2017. It is important that you retain this information until a new Summary Plan Description is issued to you.

#### Trustees News

J. Philippe Abraham was appointed as the new Chairperson of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust at the May 2017 NYSUT Board of Trustees meeting; Angelina Rivera was also appointed as a new Trustee of the Member Benefits Trust at that meeting.

The current list of Trustees of the Member Benefits Trust includes Chairperson Abraham, Secretary Roderick P. Sherman, Loretta Donlon, Jeffrey Hartnett, Matthew Hill, Thomas McMahon, Arthur Pepper, Kevin Peterman, Ms. Rivera and Thomas Tucker.

#### Term Life, Level Term Life & Senior Term Life Insurance Plans

As a result of their regular review process of all endorsed programs, the Trustees of the Member Benefits Trust voted to name Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife) the new Plan Underwriter for the endorsed Voluntary Term Life, Level Term Life and grandfathered Senior Term Life Insurance Plans (previously underwritten by The United States Life Insurance Company in the City of New York) as of March 1, 2018.

Coverage terms, benefit levels, beneficiary designations and rates for these programs will not be changed as a result of the Plan Underwriter change. MetLife's address is 200 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10166.

Mercer Consumer will remain the Plan Administrator for these programs. Mercer's toll-free phone number is 888-386-9788.

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 7.61% of earned premiums for these programs.

#### Disability & Disability II Insurance Plans

As a result of their regular review process of all endorsed programs, the Trustees of the Member Benefits Trust also voted to name Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife) the new Plan Underwriter for the endorsed Disability Insurance Plan

(previously underwritten by Unimerica Life Insurance Company) as of January 1, 2018. Coverage terms, benefit amounts and rates will not be changed as a result of the Plan Underwriter change. NYSUT in-service members and agency fee payers who are under age 65 and work 20 or more hours per week are eligible to apply for this program.

In addition, the grandfathered Disability Insurance Plan II was terminated on December 31, 2017, with program participants transferred to the MetLife Disability Insurance Plan.

MetLife's address is 200 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10166.

Mercer Consumer will remain the Plan Administrator for the Disability Insurance Plan. Mercer's toll-free phone number is 888-386-9788.

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5% of gross premiums for this program.

#### Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance

The Member Benefits Trust is now providing NYSUT members and agency fee payers with up to \$1,500 Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance, including a travel assistance component. This coverage was previously provided by NYSUT.

The \$1,500 AD&D insurance is offered

through Chubb Group Insurance Companies, and includes Travel Assistance Services provided by Europ Assistance.

**Name/Address for USI Affinity**  
Effective May 2016, Unifers/USI Affinity was purchased by AON and renamed to Aon Voluntary Benefits & Enrollment Solutions. Their mailing address is 1060 Maitland Center Commons, Suite 210, Maitland, FL 32751 and toll-free phone number is 866-697-8897.

Aon Voluntary Benefits & Enrollment Solutions administers the WrapPlan® II Universal Life Insurance Plan and grandfathered WrapPlan® Term Life Coordination Program.

#### Financial Arrangements

Financial arrangements between the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust and the providers of the following endorsed programs have changed:

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 12.57% of paid premiums for the Davis Vision Group Vision & Group Voluntary Vision Plans.

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 8% of premium for the Davis Vision Voluntary Vision Plan.

Sincerely,

Board of Trustees  
NYSUT Member Benefits Trust

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290,000 member discounts across 10,000 U.S. cities. Save on tickets to awesome theme parks, museums and attractions, movies and theater events, concert and sporting events, zoos and aquariums, restaurants and much more.

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## Off-peak travel

If you're someone who prefers to travel during off-peak times, we've got just the program for you. Save up to 40 percent off the "Best Available Rate" along with \$399 select weekly stays (and sometimes even cheaper) at more than 2,400 resort condo properties in 90 countries with TripBeat by Endless Vacation.

Choose from condo-style suites with all the comforts of home, including fully equipped kitchens, living/dining rooms, washers and dryers, and enough space for the whole family.

## Orlando deals

The Orlando Employee Discounts program offers savings of 30 percent on tickets to Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World, Discovery Bay, Aquatica and other Orlando area attractions; up to 60 percent off at select Orlando hotels; and a variety of hotel and theme park ticket travel packages that are certain to provide lasting memories.

Visit the Member Benefits website — [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) — to learn more about these endorsed programs along with many other



savings opportunities.

Or, call 800-626-8101 to connect with a live Member Benefits staff member.

For information about this program or about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

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



## CONTACT US

FOR ALL YOUR HOME FINANCING NEEDS

**Daniel Moschetti** NMLS #420643  
Branch Manager/MLO NY LIC #420643  
Call (845) 269-3700  
[dmoschetti@loanDepot.com](mailto:dmoschetti@loanDepot.com)

**Ann Marie Manfredi** NMLS #58811  
Mortgage Loan Originator NY LIC #58811  
Call (845) 406-5218  
[amanfredi@loanDepot.com](mailto:amanfredi@loanDepot.com)

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## MORE THAN 75%

of caregiving support in the U.S. is provided by unpaid family members – find out how your plan can include **PAYING FOR FAMILY.**

NYSUT members & their eligible family members can receive a **5% DISCOUNT** on various plans with the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Long-Term Care Program.



Endorsed By:  
MEMBER BENEFITS  


**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Contact New York Long-Term Care Brokers  
**888-884-0077 | [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org)**

The New York Long-Term Care Brokers Insurance Program is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 2.5% of first-year premium and 1% of renewal premium received in years 2-10. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



**Call today to learn about the special savings and discounts you may be eligible for.**

**1-866-NYSUT-22**

MetLife Auto & Home can give you more protection for your vehicle and save you money. Get the coverage you need for one of your most important possessions with special member discounts that can save you up to 12%. You can choose from a wide variety of coverages, including auto, home, boat, renter's and more.

To see how these discounts could really add up; call us toll-free at 1-866-NYSUT-22 (1-866-697-8822). You have the option to speak with a local agent for a free insurance review and no obligation quote. To find a local agent in your area, visit [www.MetLife.com/NYSUT](http://www.MetLife.com/NYSUT).



MetLife Auto & Home is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5.5% of total premiums for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

MetLife Auto & Home is a brand of Metropolitan Property and Casualty Insurance Company and its affiliates: Economy Preferred Insurance Company, Metropolitan Casualty Insurance Company, Metropolitan Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Company, Metropolitan General Insurance Company, Metropolitan Group Property and Casualty Insurance Company, and Metropolitan Lloyds Insurance Company of Texas, all with administrative home offices in Warwick, RI. Coverage, rates, discounts and policy features vary by state and product, and are available in most states to those who qualify. Met P&C®, MetCasSM, and MetGenSM are licensed in the state of Minnesota. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs. L0117488350[exp0119][All States][DC]



**"A year ago I couldn't think about teaching math. Now after minimally invasive brain surgery, my pain and dizziness are gone. I'm introducing algebra to my eighth-graders again...THANKS TO NSPC."**

Nancy's road to recovery began with a call to Neurological Surgery, P.C. (NSPC) and a same-day appointment with a member of NSPC's team of world-renowned brain and spine surgeons. She received a personalized treatment plan that ensured the best possible outcome. Nancy's journey ended with minimally invasive surgery that restored her normal life, including a return to the classroom.

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7:30am to 3:00pm  
NY Hilton



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## Have all the service credit you deserve?

**S**chool employees in non-teaching titles are eligible to become members of the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS). If you're an ERS member, service credit is one of the main factors that will determine your retirement benefit. Many school employees work for 10 months out of the year or work a part-time schedule. Have you ever wondered how this affects your service credit?

If you're a school employee who works full-time, you receive one year of service credit per school year. Generally, a full-time, 10-month school year requires at least 180 days worked in any school year. However, depending on your employer, your full-time academic schedule could require a minimum of 200 or 170 days.

Part-time school employees earn service credit based on the number of days they work. Part-time credit is calculated by dividing the number of days worked by the number of days in a full-time year. Let's say a school employee works 135 days in a year, and 180 is considered full-time: 135 days worked/180 days in a year = 0.75 years of service credit, or 75 percent of a full-time year.

The most convenient way to find out how much service you've earned with ERS is through Retirement Online, our self-service tool that gives you access to your retirement account information. You can register or sign in at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/).



In every issue, state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, administrative head of the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) and trustee of the Common Retirement Fund, provides information on the System, which delivers retirement benefits to many NYSUT School-Related Professionals and other support staff. If you are an ERS member with a question of general interest, email [united@nysutmail.org](mailto:united@nysutmail.org).

For immediate assistance, call the ERS Contact Center toll-free at 866-805-0990 or 518-474-7736 in the Capital District.

[state.ny.us/retire/index.php](http://state.ny.us/retire/index.php).

You can also check your Member Annual Statement, which is provided to you every summer. Statements are sent out from May to July, and school employees usually receive their statements first. For most members, your next statement will show how much service credit you've earned for the past state fiscal year (April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018). It will also show your total service credit as of March 31, 2018.

If you think you are missing service credit that you may be entitled to, please read our publication, *Service Credit for Tiers 2-6* ([www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vo1854.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vo1854.php)), to find out what types of service are creditable and how to apply. You may also be able to receive credit for military service. It is very important that you claim — as early as possible — all the service credit you are entitled to receive because records documenting your previous service may be lost or destroyed with the passage of time.

If you have questions specific to your account, please contact us at [www.contactNYSLRs.com](http://www.contactNYSLRs.com).

### NYSUT ERS consultants

Most NYSUT School-Related Professionals\* belong to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS). NYSUT ERS consultants are available to help SRP members navigate the retirement system. Consultants can answer questions, provide forms and help members contact the ERS. Contact any one of our consultants for assistance.

Trudi Davis • 914-592-4411  
[troers@nysutmail.org](mailto:troers@nysutmail.org)

Kathy Hine • 585-454-5550, ext. 144  
[rochers@nysutmail.org](mailto:rochers@nysutmail.org)

Patti Lennon • 516-496-2035, ext. 324  
[nroers@nysutmail.org](mailto:nroers@nysutmail.org)

\*Note: Certified teaching assistants belong to the state Teachers' Retirement System (TRS).



## Fill out your retirement application online

**Q:** Can I complete my retirement application online? Filling out all that paperwork is a chore.

**A:** You can now. An online retirement application is the latest addition to MyNYSTRS, the New York State Teachers' Retirement System's secure, self-service member portal. Although the traditional eight-page paper application is still available, the online format is a welcome addition. It cuts out snail mail and features built-in logic to ensure you don't make the type of mistake that would cause a paper application to be rejected.

Unfortunately, if you're filing for disability retirement, are not at least

54, requesting a non-standard payment option, or can meet certain other criteria, you can't use the online application. Remember, the earliest you can apply is 90 days prior to your effective date of retirement, so you'll be unable to submit the application any sooner. Contact NYSTRS at 800-348-7298, ext. 6250, or visit [www.nystrs.org](http://www.nystrs.org) for further information.

**Q:** An online application sounds great. Can I save my work over several sessions, or do I have to complete the entire retirement application in one sitting?

**A:** You can complete your application over several sessions since the system automatically saves and stores your answers as you go. A big plus is that when you do return, you can quickly see the application sections you've already completed, and the sections that still need filling in. You can also modify previously answered parts. A "review & submit my application" button will appear only when the form has been fully completed. After you submit your application, check your inbox for an email confirming that NYSTRS received it.

### Did you know?

For MyNYSTRS account holders, 2017 tax statements (1099-R) are available online.

### NYSUT TRS consultants

TRS members with questions may call your teacher-members on the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board of Directors:

David Keefe • 516-741-1241  
(Retiree Representative)

Paul Farfaglia • 315-431-4040  
[pfarfagl@nysutmail.org](mailto:pfarfagl@nysutmail.org)

Sheila Sullivan Buck  
585-454-5550  
[sbuck@nysutmail.org](mailto:sbuck@nysutmail.org)

Ronald Gross • 631-273-8822  
[rgross@nysutmail.org](mailto:rgross@nysutmail.org)



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NYSUT represents teachers, school-related professionals, higher education faculty, professionals in education, human services and health care, and retirees.

## NYSUT Member Benefits. More than discounts...

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As an additional value to NYSUT members and their families, your union membership allows you to enjoy the benefits of more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. Participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also gives you a trusted advocate ready to assist you with any issues or concerns with these programs.

*You count on your union to be there for you when you need it...  
count on NYSUT Member Benefits to be there for you too!*

### NYSUT Member Benefits offers something for everyone:

Life, Auto & Homeowners Ins.

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Membership in NYSUT also allows you to enjoy the convenience, additional coverage and/or discounted premiums of using Payroll or Pension Deduction as your payment method to purchase Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services.

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