

NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

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Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AND UNION FAMILY AT NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS

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 Andrew Pallotta
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 Jolene T. DiBrango
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Ron Gross
 Ron Gross
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The song remains the same: Raise revenue

Union's legislative priorities focus on COVID-19 issues

By Ned Hoskin
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There's no debate over this fact: At the current rate, in the midst of a pandemic, New York State faces a fiscal deficit of some \$60 billion over the next four to five years.

And there should be no debate over this fact, as well: The two-pronged solution is to enact federal COVID-19 stimulus funding and to raise revenue at home by taxing the state's wealthiest residents.

"We can hope the changes in Washington, D.C., will loosen the purse strings for much needed pandemic relief," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "But we need the commonsense revenue enhancers at home to survive this medical, educational and economic disaster."

Enacted as the coronavirus shoved the economy into a tailspin, last year's state budget reduced state support for schools for 2020-21 by \$1.1 billion through what was called the Pandemic Adjustment. Some of that was covered by the federal CARES Act, but it did not fully restore lost state aid to public schools.

As a result of the fiscal situation, the New York State Division of Budget has been withholding support for higher education on SUNY and CUNY campuses as well as community colleges, causing massive layoffs, lost programs and ballooning class sizes. They also zeroed-out funding for educational programs such as Universal Pre-K and teacher centers, essentially shutting them

down. Now, a further 20 percent reduction in state aid looms as a step toward closing the state budget gap. Such cuts taken in lieu of revenue solutions are unfair and ill-advised, NYSUT maintains. "This is simple," Pallotta said. "Devastating cuts to state aid will lead to a reprehensible loss of opportunities for students. It's time to refocus on federal stimulus funding and state revenues that can help cover the budget gap and stop deep cuts

to public schools. The alternative simply isn't acceptable for students, educators and families."

Session in isolation

The legislative session will be even more unusual than last year's, which shifted to remote business and essentially kept the books open for months. This year, the Legislature will meet online to comply with social distancing requirements.

Of course, that also means the face-to-face rituals of lobbying at the Capitol will be impossible. NYSUT activists in the Committee of 100, and the legislative staff, will still be working the phones, the emails and the Zoom meetings.

- Obviously, COVID-19 recovery is the No. 1 priority. Students in all public schools — including low-wealth rural and urban areas — must have the equipment, the internet access and the resources needed to support their education.

- NYSUT activists will also be looking to restore funding cuts that were made last year. In higher education and pre-K-12, these programs must be made whole.

- Community schools, which serve entire communities with wrap-around health and social services to improve education, took a hit last year. They require committed funding to build a better system, with a school nurse in every building, and to ensure supports are available to help with the mental health needs of students and teachers.



COMING UP

Jan. 6

Governor's State of the State address; 2021 NYS legislative session convenes



Jan. 11-12

Board of Regents meets

Jan. 18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day



Jan. 20

59th Presidential Inauguration

Jan. 29-30

NYSUT Board of Directors meets

Feb. 8-9

Board of Regents meets

Feb. 12-14

NYS Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators annual legislative conference

Please note, some or all of these events may be conducted as virtual meetings in compliance with social distancing guidance. NYSUT will continue to hold lobby days in 2021. However, they will be held virtually due to COVID-19. Details and dates are still being finalized. Information will be shared with Local Presidents in January.

ON THE COVER

Designed by Nicole Clayton

We'll have one of our own in the White House



As second lady, Jill Biden frequently visited schools.

By **Sylvia Saunders**
sylvia.saunders@nysut.org

Talk about elevating teacher voice. When President-elect Joe Biden takes his oath of office this month, he will have a longtime teacher and union member standing by his side: Dr. Jill Biden.

The future first lady is a lifelong educator who loves the profession so

much that she will continue teaching at an area community college even after she moves into the White House — just like she did while her husband served as vice president. She is a longtime member of the National Education Association.

“Teaching isn’t just what she does. It’s who she is,” Joe Biden said in his Nov. 7 victory speech. “For America’s

educators, this is a great day. You’re going to have one of your own in the White House.”

Known as “Dr. B.” to her community college students, Biden has been an educator for more than three decades. Before moving to Washington, D.C., she taught English and writing at a community college in Delaware, at public high schools and at a psychiatric hospital for adolescents. When she gave her Democratic National Convention speech last summer, it was from her former classroom at Brandywine High School in Delaware.

She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 2007, with a dissertation on how to maximize student retention in community college. She also has master’s degrees in education and English.

Jill Biden is often asked why she wants to continue teaching at Northern Virginia Community College while serving as first lady.

“It’s important, and I want people to value teachers and know their contributions, and lift up the profession,” she told the “CBS Morning Show.”

Biden is passionate about the power of community college as a path to success — and always a strong advocate for expanding higher education access and support.

Not surprisingly, Jill Biden strongly supports her husband’s promise to appoint an educator to be the nation’s new education secretary.

“Four years of Betsy DeVos is more than enough,” Joe Biden said. “We need a secretary of education who is actually a public school educator.”

DeVos, who has been among the most unpopular cabinet members in the Trump administration, never taught in a classroom or attended a public school. The education secretary oversees the U.S. Department of Education and sets the nation’s agenda on everything from standardized testing requirements to federal funding priorities.

Biden has repeatedly made it clear he intends to keep listening to educators. “You will never find in American history a president who is more teacher-centric and more supportive of teachers than me,” Biden told NEA members at their 2020 convention.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION MEETING • NYSUT BOARD OF DIRECTORS VACANCY ELECTION • ELECTION DISTRICT 26

A vacancy exists on the NYSUT Board of Directors for Election District 26. The vacancy was created by the resignation of Evelyn DeJesus, effective Dec. 31, 2020.

In accordance with the NYSUT Constitution, Article IX, §§4(a) and 4(b): “Directors representing Election Districts shall be elected on a roll call vote by a majority of ballots cast by the representatives from their respective constituencies...[and in]...the event of a vacancy in the position of Election District Director, the President shall call a special election to elect a successor who shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.”

Pursuant to NYSUT Constitution, Article IX, §4(b) and the approved NYSUT Campaign and Election Procedures, NYSUT members who were reported as elected delegates to the 2020 Representative Assembly representing the members of ED 24–35 will be eligible to vote in this Special Election.

The delegates and alternates of ED 24–35 are hereby notified that this vacancy will be filled by a Special Election. Due to ongoing government restrictions on public gatherings brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to ensure compliance with the NYSUT Constitution, Bylaws, and all applicable laws, this Special Election will be conducted by mail ballot following an electronic special election Zoom meeting:

DATE: Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021

TIME: 6 p.m.

PLACE: Electronic Zoom Meeting

All eligible delegate voters who were reported to the 2020 NYSUT Representative Assembly from ED 24–35 will be sent login instructions one week prior to the meeting, Feb. 9, 2021. If a delegate does not receive login instructions by that date, they may request instructions by contacting the NYSUT Elections Committee at elections@nysut.org or by contacting

the NYSUT Office of the President at 800-342-9810.

Nominations to fill this vacancy will be accepted in accordance with the Campaign and Election Procedures approved by the NYSUT Board of Directors adopted for the 2020 Representative Assembly. In order to qualify as a candidate for this Special Election, a Nominating Petition must be fully completed and then signed by at least two (2) in-service members from ED 24–35.

The completed and signed Nominating Petition must then be received by the NYSUT Elections Committee by the close of business (5 p.m.) on Jan. 25, 2021. Any member in good standing from a NYSUT local within ED 24–35 may be a candidate. Only in-service members in good standing from ED 24–35 may sign a candidate’s Nominating Petition. Nominating Petitions are available by contacting the NYSUT Elections Committee at elections@nysut.org or by contacting the NYSUT Office of the President at 800-342-9810.

At the Special Election Meeting, each candidate shall be given an opportunity to address the meeting for a period not to exceed three (3) minutes at a Candidates’ forum scheduled for 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021, via electronic Zoom meeting. Ballots will be mailed to electors on or about Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021. Ballots must be returned to and received by NYSUT Elections Committee by the close of business (5 p.m.) on Thursday, March 11, 2020, for tabulation at that time, or as soon afterward as possible.

The candidate elected will serve as successor Election District Director immediately upon the completion of tabulation and continue to serve as the Successor Director through the conclusion of the 2023 Representative Assembly.

All elected delegates or their alternates reported for the 2020 NYSUT RA from ED 24–35 are requested to be present for this election meeting.

Furloughs, layoffs are not the answer

By Ned Hoskin
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The statewide union is standing up for common sense and urging calm this holiday season as districts struggle with reduced state aid and fear further fiscal fallout of the pandemic.

The rush to cut staff might save pennies, but the cost to the community is devastating.

Two weeks before the holiday break, the Syracuse Teachers Association met to discuss the district's sudden plans to furlough and lay off teachers and School-Related Professionals, plans based on potential 20 percent cuts in school aid.

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, who met online with STA members and President Bill Scott, said it's not clear why the district floated this proposal.

Pallotta called the Division of Budget in Albany and asked if there was some new directive to cut staff, because the Syracuse district said it had no choice.

"The answer I got is no," he said.

STA's Scott said 85 percent of the district's funding comes from the state, and proposed cuts could result in a \$40-\$70 million shortfall. But they haven't happened yet.

The district has already enacted a central office hiring freeze, begun austerity spending and program reductions. It seeks the layoffs and furloughs to help cut \$15 million in spending for the remainder of the

school year, Scott said. Talks with the STA continue.

"We are working on finalizing an agreement for voluntary furlough that would meet members' needs and would not interfere with instruction," Scott said.

Districts in several regions went through the same thing in September. After efforts to pass a second COVID-19 stimulus bill in Washington stalled, some districts threatened massive layoffs because, they said, the state told them aid was being withheld and the cuts had to be made.

NYSUT and local unions fought back — even taking legal action — and the Division of Budget promised to deliver some of the delayed school aid payments and to hold off on further cuts until after the elections. DOB said it was all a misunderstanding.

Some layoffs were averted, although many were not, including in Schenectady, Albany and Rochester.

NYSUT continues its Fund Our Future initiative that calls for new federal stimulus funding for education and state revenue enhancements, including taxes on the ultra-wealthy.

NYSUT expects to see a pandemic aid package from the federal government, although there are no guarantees.

In mid-December, NYSUT, other labor unions and the State AFL-CIO urged lawmakers to increase revenue by taxing ultramillionaires and billionaires, saying it would raise up to \$9 billion to offset the economic

strain of the coronavirus crisis.

As a result, Gov. Cuomo announced \$1.5 billion to provide money to organizations facing cash flow issues. The state AFL-CIO supported the move as a temporary fix to help keep organizations operational in January and February while the state budget is being negotiated. NYSUT is working with the governor's office to ensure that these funds will be accessible by public schools, SUNY and CUNY to stave off additional cuts and layoffs.



Bill Scott, president of the Syracuse TA.

Below: NYSUT President Andy Pallotta is interviewed by CNYCentral about the situation in Syracuse.

Meanwhile, the Whitesboro district, near Utica, put 103 non-teaching staff members on furlough between Thanksgiving and Christmas while the district switched to remote-only learning. The local Whitesboro Employees Union ensured furloughed staff members retained health insurance coverage and could use paid time off.

"This is an incredibly painful situation for the members of the WEU and one that we do not take lightly," Jennifer Faulkner, union president, told the *Observer-Dispatch*. "Make no mistake, though, the district's decision will have ripple effects across our community."

Help from your union

NYSUT's online Career Center at nysut.org/resources includes links for education job listings in New York State, along with information to help you progress in your career and many links to additional resources.

The "Resources for Laid-Off Employees" provides information about protecting your benefits, your rights in returning to work, and news and resources to help in a job search.





TRS board vacancy; Jan. 8 deadline

NYSUT Second Vice President and NYSTRS Trustee Ron Gross will be stepping down from the NYSTRS Board of Trustees on Jan. 31. This will create a vacancy for one of the three teacher-members on the NYSTRS Board.

NYSUT is accepting applications from NYSUT members, who are actively teaching, for consideration for an appointment by the New York State Commissioner of Education to fill the remainder of Gross's term, which will expire in November. The appointee will then seek election to a three-year term on the NYSTRS Board at the NYSTRS Delegates Meeting in November.

NYSUT members wishing to apply should submit a letter of intent and a resume no later than Jan. 8, outlining how their credentials and background align with the candidate guidelines outlined in the NYSUT Policy Manual. Specifically, candidates should possess:

- A working knowledge of, and experience with, the state Teachers' Retirement System;
- A demonstrated, long-standing interest in retirement matters, such as serving as a delegate to the annual NYSTRS Delegates Meeting;
- A willingness to run for election for this position in November of 2021 for a new three-year term of office on the NYSTRS Board of Trustees; and
- A willingness to commit to NYSUT's retirement education program and work with the other NYSTRS Trustees.

Candidates who meet the qualifications listed above will be contacted for an interview by NYSUT's Selection Committee. Virtual interviews will be conducted on the evenings of Jan. 20 and Jan. 21.

NYSUT members who are interested in applying for this position should email their resume and a letter of intent to the Office of the NYSUT President at NYSTRSdelegates@nysut.org.

Questions? Please contact NYSUT's Deputy Director of Legislation Pete Savage, at peter.savage@nysut.org.

Union: Remain vigilant against privatization threats



Stacy Moran, Newburgh TA

PROVIDED

By **Liza Frenette**
liza.frenette@nysut.org

There are people who use disasters and crises to profit and laborers need to be watchful against attempts to privatize their work now during the pandemic when education budgets are being slashed.

Tim Barchak, organizer, lobbyist and policy analyst with National Education Association, issued that warning during NYSUT's 2020 School-Related Professionals leadership conference, held online this year.

Privatizers can ignore benefits — such as sick days and health care — vital to keeping workplaces healthy and safe during the pandemic.

"If there's an outbreak of COVID-19 we want to know if an employee is feeling ill," Barchak said. However, if employees feel pressured to work or don't have sick days, they may be

less likely to disclose. "Privatizers literally put our students and teachers in danger. As an association, we need to stop mincing words and say it that way."

In challenging times, "we need more transparency and public accountability," he said. "The community and school district should be as committed to SRPs as they are to students."

The COVID-19 pandemic is a time to recognize how essential SRP's are, Barchak said.

Privatization often leads to a combination of business practices that will make a school community less safe, he said, including a workforce that can be less stable due to temporary job seekers, and workers not as committed to the school population.

SRPs are not the only school workforce at risk.

Recently, the Newburgh Teachers Association won a Public Employment Relations Board ruling upholding its opposition to the ongoing privatization of school social workers.

Stacy Moran, Newburgh TA president, explained that during an economic crisis in 2012-13, the district lost social workers and school psychologists. A community schools grant brought in subcontracted social workers through the Orange County Department of Mental Health for three years; the psychologists were not replaced.

"Clinical staffing was reduced by five clinicians, resulting in a total of 15 school psychologists and social workers for over 11,000 students," Moran said. Elementary, middle and high school students were affected.

By the time the three-year grant program was up, Moran said, the district was in better financial shape to bring back the bargaining unit social workers but has failed to do so to the staffing level that existed prior to 2012.

"We put them on notice that we did not agree to use the subcontracted workers," Moran said. The union filed an improper practice charge in December 2017. This year, the TA won a PERB case to eliminate the use of the subcontracted social workers and return the work to bargaining unit personnel. The district is appealing.

The subcontracting of these social workers is concerning for several reasons, Moran explained, with the key concern being that their services were limited only to students who had health insurance.

"In a district like Newburgh, that cuts out so many students," she said.

Get your story out



When fighting against the threat of privatization, Barchak said, it's important for those working in education to ensure that school boards, parents and the public understand how vital their roles are.

- Attend monthly school board meetings; become recognized names and faces.
- Let stakeholders such as BOE, PTA and other parent groups know the types of work you and your colleagues perform.
- Ask board members and legislators to job shadow for a day.

WOMEN NYSUT

Committee meeting has “PowHERful” theme

By Kara Smith
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The United States will inaugurate Kamala Harris as vice president in January; she will be the first woman to hold the position. Harris will also be the first woman of color to serve in the office, but our nation still lacks true equality.

Women don’t have full reproductive rights; economic equality; equal access to health care; and don’t hold positions of power in equal proportion to their numbers.

“Until women have equality in these areas, a women’s movement is still necessary,” said Jolene DiBrango, NYSUT executive vice president. Those words underscored the “PowHERful” theme of the 2020 NYSUT Women’s Committee meeting in November, a virtual weekend focused on raising awareness about the challenges women face and learning how to support and empower the next generation of female leaders.

Session topics included recognizing and preventing human trafficking; disparities and implicit biases in women’s health care; fostering girls’ and women’s interest in science and math; and understanding how intersectionality — overlapping differences in gender, race and class — impacts discrimination. In an art session, participants used images and words to visually document their strengths.

New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon’s keynote address detailed how she rose from a traditional upbringing to co-found and lead



SCREEN CAPTURE BY LESLIE ROSE

NYSUT members from across the state come together for the 2020 Women’s Committee meeting.

SAG-AFTRA, a 165,000-member entertainment union, and become a statewide workers’ advocate. Reardon advised speaking up, being heard and getting comfortable with power, not undercutting it with humor or apologies.

“Treat men the same way you treat women,” she said urging listeners to empower the next female vice president or president. “We have as much right to be there as anyone else.”

DiBrango and committee co-chairs Aisha Cook, New Rochelle Federation of United School Employees, and Leslie Rose, Hewlett-Woodmere Faculty Association, advocated amplifying women’s voices and harnessing their power as educators, leaders and activists.

Speaking up in difficult times is particularly important. “People assume that when you’re quiet, you’re ok,” said Cook who established the first NYSUT Women’s Committee in her local and is an AFT Women’s Committee member. “A fear of being viewed negatively keeps many girls

and women from advocating for themselves.”

Women’s committees are important because they’re an “opportunity for members to feel connected to their local,” said Rose, co-founder of NYSUT Women of Long Island. “For women who don’t want to run for office, it’s another way to get involved.”

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, Second Vice

President Ron Gross and Secretary-Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham, welcomed attendees. “I’m proud of the work you’re doing to encourage more members to take active roles in our union,” said Pallotta.

With the pandemic, the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and Kamala Harris’ election, “2020 has been a year like no other ... we have seen the lowest of lows and the highest of highs,” said DiBrango. “At our lowest, it’s easy to feel powerless, but women — our power, our ideas, our resiliency and our perseverance — are needed to lead now more than ever before.”

For more information about the NYSUT Women’s Committee, or to learn how to start a NYSUT Women’s Committee chapter in your local, visit nysut.org/women.



In one exercise, Women’s Committee members use art to document their strengths.

Union food drives filling in the gaps

By **Liza Frenette**
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One car at a time. One need at a time. The cars wound around corners and orange cones. Each car had its trunk popped up, waiting to pick up food.

Two large-scale drive-thru food pantries and several small ones sponsored by NYSUT and other labor, religious and civic organizations helped more than 1,000 families. Local unions have also held regional food drives on Long Island and in Rochester.

"I'm here for my mom and dad," said the driver of one car waiting to get food at the snow-covered Saratoga County Fairgrounds. "For them to even ask, it's a big thing."

The Saratoga event fed 450 families. The next drive-thru, held at NYSUT headquarters, fed 900 families — many of them out-of-work educators and school staffers.

A local school bus driver who was without her job from March until

September was in line for her family and a neighbor.

One man lost his job due to the pandemic. His unemployment is due to end Dec. 26.

While drivers waited, volunteers loaded boxes of frozen chicken, lettuce, potato salad, potatoes, eggs, oranges, brussel sprouts, sausages, and fresh fruit.

"Schenectady lost 440 staff, and Albany lost more than 200. This is for them, and for members of our community in need of food," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, dropping frozen chickens into the boxes. "It's powerful and inspiring."

Sonya Flowers, president of Albany Public School United Employees, stood in solidarity at a drive-thru food pantry that she helped set up at the Albany Labor Temple with NYSUT. More than 100 of her members have been laid off: home-school coordinators, maintenance workers, teaching assistants

and hall monitors.

"They're angry this has happened," she said as a car drove up for food and co-workers shouted greetings.

NYSUT worked with the Regional Food Bank and Catholic Charities to stage the drive-thru pantries in Latham, Schenectady and Albany, coordinating with the Schenectady Federation of Teachers, Albany Public School Teachers Association and Albany Public School United Employees.

"All of us need to do what we can ... and that little thing is going to change the world," said Sister Betsy Van Deusen, director of community partnerships for Catholic Charities. The food and mobile van outreach has been setting up 10 events a month in a 14-county region — up from one a month — providing resources for health care, case management, unemployment and more.

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango, Secretary-Treasurer Philippe Abraham, and Second Vice President Ron Gross, loaded food into boxes in the morning hours before the food drives opened.

One teacher waiting for food had to take a year absence to care for her son with special needs because COVID-19 has prevented access to both full-time in-school classes and day care.

"Essentially I've lost a year of pay," she said, the worry lines on her forehead visible over her mask.

"I see the need in my community, and in some of my members," said volunteer Pamela Malone, NYSUT Board member and Empire State College chapter president for UUP, the SUNY higher education union for faculty and professional staff. "Labor is always ready to help the community."

Union-sponsored drive-thru food pantries help feed hundreds of families. Left, NYSUT President Andy Pallotta prepares boxes for donation. Far right, NYSUT Second Vice President Ron Gross loads food into a trunk during a NYSUT food drive-thru.



PHOTOS: ANDREW WATSON



Multicultural leaders discuss next steps post-election

By Kara Smith
kara.smith@nysut.org

We showed up. We voted. Now what? The questions were the focus of a December “Many Threads, One Fabric” event, the third in a series of NYSUT and AFT virtual town halls exploring racial justice, diversity and equity issues. In the wake of the November general election, which saw historic voter turnout in communities of color, panelists discussed how to use that political capital to improve the lives of multicultural citizens.

Moderated by Lezli Baskerville, president and CEO of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, event panelists included Sindy Benavides, CEO, League of United Latin American Citizens; Diana Cournoyer, executive director, National Indian Education Association; Fedrick Ingram, secretary-treasurer for the American Federation of Teachers; and Kent Wong, director of the UCLA Labor Center and vice president of the California Federation of Teachers.

J. Philippe Abraham, NYSUT secretary-treasurer, whose office handles social justice issues, welcomed panelists.

“We knocked on doors, we phoned banked and we made our voices heard,” said Abraham. “The question is how do we as unionists sustain those efforts, to advance the rights of workers and immigrants and to advocate for social justice.”

The COVID-19 pandemic drove voter turnout. “It brought the inequalities in health care, economics and education to the fore,” said



“We knocked on doors, we phoned banked and we made our voices heard. The question is how do we as unionists sustain those efforts, to advance the rights of workers and immigrants and to advocate for social justice.”
— J. Philippe Abraham



Panelists from across the country discuss how communities of color can use their political capital to improve conditions for citizens who too often feel disenfranchised. Visit nysut.org/socialjustice to learn more about the union’s social justice initiatives.

Baskerville, noting that in communities of color, one in four children face food insecurity and unemployment continues to rise.

“We need a stimulus package, not just testing and vaccines, because people are struggling,” said Benavides. A real solution for immigration and diverse cabinet appointments are also important. “We

can’t be what we can’t see. We need more leaders who represent our communities.”

Ingram called for harnessing the energy of young activists to keep the pressure on lawmakers, and adopting a national approach to COVID-19, including a blueprint for keeping schools open safely. “The piecemeal strategy isn’t fair to the American

people and we can’t have another lost year for students,” he said. “Our young people were out all summer — and those folks voted for change.”

As the smallest ethnic group within the multicultural coalition, Cournoyer asked for continued inclusion for Native Americans.

“Invite us to the table, and include Natives in your fight and advocacy,” she said noting that the challenges those communities face — health care and economic and educational inequity — mirror those of other minority groups. “It’s exciting to look outside our Native nation — let’s help each other.”

Wong believes that the best way to heal the nation after four years of division is to envision a multiracial democracy

based on the values of economic and social justice. “The multiracial coalition scored a tremendous

victory,” he said. “Now we need to collectively celebrate and build on what that means for the country. We need to lift up the hopes and aspirations of all people of color and conscience and organize toward a future grounded in our common values.”

Getting to know .. Mary Smith



MARK WARNER

Mary Smith is a food service worker and member of the Syracuse Teachers Association. She was interviewed by Mark Warner, a Unit 8 SRP Director with the Syracuse TA and a member of the NYSUT SRP Advisory Committee.

Tell me about your job and why you love what you do.

I work in the kitchen prepping, preparing and serving food to the students at the Syracuse Latin School.

I love my job because I love to feed people. Nutrition plays a very important part of the students' learning experience. I feel I provide a resource to the children to help them learn and grow to their fullest potential. One of my biggest joys is that I can watch them grow from kindergarten to graduation.

I am a proud member of my union and support my brothers and sisters whenever I can.

How do you make a difference?

I feel I make a difference because we are some of the first people the students see and interact with as they start their day. We provide the nutrition and a smile that will start the day off on the right foot and a full belly to help them stay focused throughout the day. COVID-19 has affected me in a few ways, including having my extra hours cut. This not only affects me financially, but I miss the face-to-face interaction with the students and being assured that they are getting the hot meals and nutrition they need and require. This is so much more than a job for me.

What do you do outside of work?

My community involvement comes from me working with my own children. We are involved in cheerleading, marching band and Girl Scouts.

My favorite hobbies are cooking, baking and spending quality time with my family and friends.

Celebrating our SRPs



School-Related Professionals were honored on Nov. 17, New York State School-Related Professionals Appreciation Day, with giveaways, magnets, posters and treats. Here are a few highlights from the celebrations and some examples of SRPs' hard work going above and beyond in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:



Chris Horstman, president, Ithaca City School District Employees Association, bus driver:

"We make sure that students have a meal no matter what. We have made sure students have materials they need for virtual learning, and we do not see it slowing down. Bus drivers and bus aides — working between bus runs and on weekends — accomplish this task."



Don Carlisto, president, Saranac Lake Central Teachers Association: "Teachers and SRPs helped colleagues in the bus garage who had to quarantine after a worker had a positive COVID test. A call for volunteers went out to help deliver meals on delivery day for about 175 families, including the delivery of about 40 turkey dinners. Without transportation staff, this delivery was only possible with volunteers and use of their own personal vehicles."



Hilda Monfredo, SRP EVP, Western Sullivan United Teachers and School-Related Personnel: "For our hybrid schedule, teacher aides call students on the days they are not scheduled to come in to make sure they are OK, and to see if they have problems with their assignments. Our TAs speak to all the students who are fully remote daily and help them with questions and problems."

Ashleigh Wilson @AWilsonESM "Muffin' to do but appreciate you!" Thanks to our amazing School Related Professionals that play a vital role at PG! #esmPGproud #grateful #SRPRecognitionDay @npetranchuk @spkowalski @peaceandcrunchy @PineGroveLib Orange heart Blue heart



Andre L Mathis @amathis87 "As much as it takes a village to raise a child. It takes All Staff to educate a student. Happy #SRPRecognitionDay to my fellow SRPs. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to making your district just a little bit better." #SRPsRock @nysut



Christine_Sartory @oceansidereads Talk about hidden heroes? Happy SRP Day to the OUTSTANDING Tech Department. Eileen Malin is out on assignment. #srpreognitionday #srpsrock



Jon Hickey @jhickey62 Thank you to all of our School Related Professionals. Not a single school would be open right now without these dedicated members. They are our frontline workers & usually don't get the thanks and respect they deserve. #ThisShouldBeMoreThanOneDay #SRPRecognitionDay #nysutsrp

Higher ed unions committed to finding solutions

By **Ned Hoskin**
ned.hoskin@nysut.org

The budget stinks, and everybody knows the budget stinks,” said recently appointed SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras, laying it on the line as more than 50 stakeholders met for NYSUT’s annual community college summit to prepare for the upcoming legislative session.

“I think we can all unite in the theme that we need more federal aid,” he said.

Participants agreed that federal pandemic relief is long overdue, but that recovery will require enhanced revenue at the state level, as well.

“New York has been hit very hard by the pandemic and the economic

crisis, especially the community colleges,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. Gathering SUNY officials, local college presidents and labor leaders from the campuses is invaluable. “Things have changed, and with labor and management working together, we present a unified message to policymakers,” he said.

The threat of 20 percent funding cuts this winter loom large, if more funding cannot be secured. It may be impossible in the spring to avoid departmental cuts and larger classes. Previous delays of 20 percent this year have already caused cuts and disruptions.

Meanwhile, in New York City, the City University — which earlier laid off 2,900 adjuncts — failed to honor a contractual pay increase

in November. SUNY raises were delayed in September and October.

“Attempting to balance the budget on the backs of modestly paid public employees is a losing fiscal strategy, and a cruel one,” said Professional Staff Congress President Barbara Bowen. The state has failed to increase revenue by taxing the ultra-rich, she said, “preferring instead to shift costs to workers.” PSC is demanding that the chancellor rethink his plan.

At the December summit, Roberta Elins, president of the United College Employees/Fashion Institute of Technology, discussed the importance of reaching agreement with each community college’s administration on campus COVID-19 testing.

Elins said CC union leaders for the

autonomous locals have been sharing strategies as they negotiate with their employers. Most of the locals have reached agreements, she said.

At SUNY four-year campuses, United University Professions has released spring semester safety guidelines to stem the spread of coronavirus once classes restart in February.

“Our report offers the strongest possible set of guidelines for SUNY to keep students, faculty and staff, and surrounding communities safe,” said UUP President Fred Kowal. “The recommendations are built upon lessons learned from the fall semester and the excellent work that SUNY has done since the arrival of Chancellor Malatras.”

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NYSUT joins call for more student teacher placements

New York State faces an ongoing teacher shortage. To boost the teacher preparation pipeline, NYSUT joined the Conference of Big 5 School Districts, the New York State PTA and the School Administrators Association of New York State in a December push for districts to provide more student teacher opportunities.

Student teacher placements are in short supply since many schools offer only remote learning or hybrid instruction due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Student teaching is a mandatory path to teacher certification in New York State,” said Jolene DiBrango, NYSUT executive vice president. “Additionally, student teachers can provide crucial classroom support for teachers during this challenging time.”

Betty Rosa, interim State Education Department commissioner, and the state Board of Regents agreed, issuing a December guidance document encouraging districts to accept student teachers as a means to replace retiring teachers and to address shortage areas.

The State University of New York anticipates that New York will need at least 180,000 teachers in the next decade. However, enrollment in New York’s teacher education programs has fallen by roughly 50 percent since 2009. The state Teachers’ Retirement System projects that one-third of the state’s teachers could retire in the next five years.

Diversity is also a concern. While 43 percent of students statewide are Latinx or Black, just 16 percent of teachers are. The state Board of Regents released data in 2019 showing that more than 200 school districts statewide do not employ any teachers of color.

An unexpected group questions teacher rating this year

By Sylvia Saunders
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With the pandemic upending every aspect of education, one of the pioneers of a nationally known teacher evaluation system suggests this is not the year to be focusing on teacher ratings.

“Teachers need support, not scores,” says The Danielson Group, explaining why its remote teaching guide includes no teacher evaluation rubric. “Now is not the time to be thinking about how to evaluate teacher performance in a new and fluid context. This moment compels us to pause and engage in a thoughtful reset on our approaches to teacher support.”

While the union and many educators have voiced similar concerns, this is an unexpected move from The Danielson Group, whose four-level “Framework for Teaching” evaluation rubric serves as a model for many school districts across the country. It’s the basis of New York’s HEDI rating system, standing for Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective.

“The school year ahead will be like no other before it and, we hope, like no other after it,” the group’s Framework for Remote Teaching guide’s introduction says. Referencing both the pandemic and today’s focus on racial justice issues, the guide suggests

prioritizing student well-being, teacher wellness and family engagement in the 2020–21 school year.

At recent Board of Regents meetings, State Education Department officials acknowledged that many school districts are concerned about teacher evaluations because they use state assessments to measure the student performance category for Annual Professional Performance Reviews.

The board has not yet decided whether state assessments will be held this year but have made it clear that if any tests are administered, they must be in-person in school buildings. Last school year’s state exams were canceled due to the pandemic.

To give districts flexibility on APPR, SED is allowing districts to use the variance process for COVID-19-related temporary changes to APPR plans. Any changes must be locally negotiated.

In response to NYSUT concerns, the Regents voted in December to continue to

accept variance applications for the rest of the school year.

Districts will still have to follow state law on minimum APPR requirements. However, many district plans currently require more. Variances could temporarily include: reducing the number of observations (if more than two are required); revising the student performance measure; and changing unannounced observations to be announced. Variances must be approved by SED and in compliance with Education Law.

The Regents and SED do not have the power to halt APPR this year. That would require an Executive Order from the governor, or a new state law approved by the Legislature and governor.



Educators say 'new normal' is not sustainable

By Sylvia Saunders
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As districts cope with spiking COVID-19 cases and crippling staff shortages, union members urged NYSUT to keep up the pressure for increased safety measures and more social-emotional support for staff.

"The push is to keep schools open — not keep them safe," said Joanna Monachino-Orlando, Shenendehowa Teachers Association.

"Teachers are performing miracles at great personal cost," said Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake leader Mike Mosall. "It's not sustainable."

The two were among many who spoke out recently in a series of online union meetings, including NYSUT's Policy Council, Subject Area committees and BOCES Leadership Council.

Clearly moved by the first-hand reports from the field, NYSUT officers said their comments will help shape the statewide union's ongoing advocacy with the governor's office, state legislators, the Department of Health and State Education Department.

"We're going to keep pushing back," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

NYSUT members from around the state shared poignant stories of how difficult it is to keep up with ever-changing state protocols for COVID-19 — and the varying implementation by local school districts. Many voiced concerns about the wide range of quarantine policies, testing protocols and a lack of notification when someone in the

school community tests positive for COVID-19.

The uncertainty is taking its toll, leaders said. As COVID cases spiked throughout November and December, a growing number of schools shifted back and forth between in-person/hybrid schedules to fully remote. Others extended remote instruction into January and beyond.

With so many chaotic scheduling changes and hybrid versions, many members are struggling with childcare issues, said Schenectady



Federation of Teachers President Juliet Benaquisto. "It would be a little easier if schedules were more aligned," she said.

Union leaders also urged NYSUT to advocate for the state to cancel this year's Regents Exams and grades 3-8 assessments. "We're half-way through the year and there are big differences in how kids are learning," said North Syracuse Education Association's Joanne Thornton. "Teachers and students need to know; what will finals look like?"

Leaders also noted the lack of uniformity among districts and schools is clearly hurting morale. While some schools allow educators to teach remotely from their homes, others require that staff report to school to stream lessons. "It's insulting," said one elementary teacher, who must report to her empty classroom.

With so many educators in and out of quarantine and a severe shortage of substitutes, some districts have shifted to fully remote because they simply don't have enough staff.

"I worry that COVID-19 has increased the inequity around the state," said Benaquisto, whose district depends significantly on state aid. "Our district went remote because of savings. We also struggle with the digital divide."

The pandemic "has also brought to light the terrible condition of school buildings," said Newburgh TA's Lourdes Lopez-Romero. Clarence TA President Elizabeth Dunne agreed, asking why the state's ventilation standards are more stringent for malls than school buildings.

"The pandemic has also shown us we need to have something in place for (staff) burnout," said Dora Leland, a Horseheads TA leader and NYSUT Board member. "In the last four months, we've had members who are sobbing — and they do not feel supported. Social-emotional support does not mean shooting us an EAP video to watch."

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango agreed, noting that SED's reopening guidance clearly specifies that districts must provide



ONLINE SAFETY IS KEY

With so many hours each day now devoted to online teaching, learning and communicating with students, NYSUT reminds members to stay sharp on basic online safety.

The American Federation of Teachers has compiled a list of resources where educators can easily access information on cyberbullying, privacy, how to protect your identity, and digital citizenship, among other issues. Visit aft.org/online-safety-and-cyberbullying-resources.

For school social workers who may be providing telemental health services, the New York State School Social Workers Association recommends avoiding social media, personal cellphones or personal emails to connect with students or families. For more info, visit nyssswa.org/coronavirus-school-response-resources/telemental-health-school-social-work-services/.

With many people using Zoom to connect virtually, it's important to know how to keep uninvited guests out — using a waiting room is recommended. Find more tips at blog.zoom.us/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/.

ongoing social and emotional supports for staff.

"Educators are hurting," DiBrango wrote in a blog after the meetings. "Pandemic teaching and learning is hard, exhausting and some days nearly impossible."

She said it's essential for districts to make social-emotional support for staff a priority for the new year. "Educators need time to plan, time to collaborate and time to share how things are really going," DiBrango said. "They need real help and real solutions to tackle the challenges they are facing, so they can be at their best for the students they care so deeply about."

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Educators share lessons learned on remote/hybrid teaching

By Sylvia Saunders

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Even the most experienced educators feel like first-year teachers this year.

While there's no teacher's manual for today's blended/hybrid learning environment, hundreds of educators from around the state shared practical tips and support during a series of free online webinars sponsored by NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust.

"Some days are more about survival than academic achievement," said Kurt Hassenpflug, an ELA/ENL teacher and North Colonie Teachers Association member who served as one of the panelists. "I feel more like Sisyphus than Hercules."

Hassenpflug was one of three teachers on the ELT panel who offered a wide range of helpful tips during the sessions in November and December.

Looking for a more effective way to communicate with parents? Use **loom.com** to create quick videos explaining assignments. Want to create animated GIFs? Try **https://gifcap.dev/**.

Presenter Kira Martelli, a sixth-grade teacher and Massapequa Federation of Teachers member, offered helpful tips on staying mobile for teachers traveling from classroom to classroom, such as using an apron, a backpack and a cart. Stick-on big

If you missed NYSUT's two-part webinar series "Teaching in Blended & Hybrid Models," video recordings and resources are posted at nysut.org/hybrid. You'll find tech tips and a collection of recommended online apps, from gamified quizzes to actors reading stories.

chart paper is also invaluable.

"Always have a lesson plan in your back pocket," Martelli said. "We're in a blended model and we always have to be ready to go (fully) remote with less than 12 hours notice."

Newburgh TA's Kathleen Young, a physical education teacher, said it's important to keep social-emotional needs front and center — for both educators and students.

"Turn off emails at the end of the day. Set alarms for start and finish times," Young said. "Be patient with yourself and the students."

The sessions were divided into two parts. In the first session, panelists discussed how to weave structure and routines into a chaotic day. The second session offered suggestions for engaging assignments and purposeful formative assessments, trouble shooting technology and modifying instruction for different learners.

To get out in front of that "Wait, what are we doing?" constant question during instruction, Hassenpflug suggested a multi-modal

approach, including subtitles, images and multiple screens. If you are doing breakout rooms, give clear instructions on what's expected.

Hassenpflug also urged participants to work through their union to advocate for training and raise concerns. "Know your contract," he said.

During question-and-answer periods, participants talked about the importance of informing parents if students aren't working, keeping grades up to date and ensuring school counselors are in the loop. Participants shared dozens of online tools and resources such as the Teachers Pay Teachers website, Book Creator and Class Dojo. A group of Long Island science teachers have created an online collection of lesson materials for middle school and high school courses.

Throughout the sessions, participants used the online chat to share more suggestions and thank presenters for their recommendations.

"Thank you for that See-Think-Wonder graphic organizer!" said Cossackie TA's Joshua Pray. Kenmore TA's Mary Lynn Bieron, said teaching remotely can be very isolating. "Sometimes it's just nice to see/hear that across the state we are all in this together!"

NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango said the union offered the free webinars at the request of members, who said they needed practical training they could use immediately. "These sessions really filled a critical need," DiBrango said. "They've also served as a powerful support system. It's essential for us to lean on each other and share resources to make the daily instructional load a little less challenging."



TECH TROUBLES?

- When in doubt, restart devices.
- Is it charged? Even if it is, try plugging it in anyway.
- Hold down the power button longer than you think you need to.
- Try switching the device into airplane mode; leave it for a minute, then switch it out. This resets the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth radios built into most devices.
- Have a pre-established plan for what students will work on when WiFi goes down or there are tech troubles.



For more ELT courses and seminars, go to <https://bit.ly/WebBasedTools>

Union sees path forward with new slate of educator-lawmakers

NYSUT-backed winners help secure unprecedented 'supermajority' in State Senate

By Ned Hoskin
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After years of hard work with many months of active support from members of NYSUT and other unions all over the state, new state Sen. John Mannion finally broke through in Central New York's 50th Senate District.

Sworn in Dec. 16 in Albany, the Democrat has been the longtime president of the West Genesee Teachers Association and a NYSUT political activist.

"It's an honor for me and my family," the science teacher said, "but it's a victory for working people in Central New York who will finally have a senator who can bring our voice and our values to Albany."

Mannion is a product of the NYSUT Pipeline Project that helps identify, train and support local union members who are interested

in running for office. He joins several other members in the state Legislature, most of whom came through the pipeline.

Sen.-elect Jabari Brisport, D-Brooklyn, and Assemblymembers-elect Chantel Jackson, D-Bronx, and Bill Conrad, D-Tonawanda, also will be sworn in. They join re-elected members of the Assembly Pat Burke, D-Buffalo, and Monica Wallace, D-Lancaster, among others who are members or former members of the statewide union.

Having educators who are also

labor leaders and activists in the halls of power is essential, said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, as fiscal support for public education, from pre-K through graduate school, seems to be one of the first things sacrificed when budget negotiations at the statehouse heat up.

These educator-lawmakers "know how many educators we've lost and the impact on students and communities," Pallotta told the *State of Politics* blog recently. "So they will be ferocious when they are fighting for the schools and for the communities

throughout the state that will be impacted by negative budgets."

Veto-proof supermajority

Two years ago, Democrats rode a mid-term wave to seize control of the state Senate in New York. But the moderating thumb of the executive branch weighed on their ability to move significant parts of their agenda.

In the weeks following this year's elections, as mail-in ballots were tallied and results were certified, the scales tipped.

When NYSUT-backed freshman

Democrat Sen. Pete Harckham declared victory on Dec. 3 in the lower Hudson Valley, Democrats took a veto-proof supermajority in the Senate for the first time ever. Dems also control the state Assembly and hold every statewide elected seat.

Democrats had set a goal in 2019 to emerge from the 2020 elections with 42 seats and a two-thirds supermajority, meaning they won't need to rely on Republican support to override gubernatorial vetoes.

When Mannion finally won his race in Senate District 50 the

following week, they exceeded their goal with 43 seats.

"We worked hard to support the incumbents and candidates who share our agenda, our values and our vision," said Pallotta. "The historic veto-proof majority ensures that these allies will be able to pursue the policies and programs that best serve our communities, students and patients, as well as the NYSUT members who worked so hard."

Over the past several years, a number of NYSUT-backed legislative initiatives have passed both houses

of the Legislature, only to die on the governor's desk.

In the wake of the 2020 U.S. Census, this advantage also means Democrats will be able to draw new district lines in 2022, if their supermajority is still intact. As of today, three Senate Dems are running for local office in New York City in 2021.

The now-former West Genesee Teachers Association President, now-Sen. John Mannion (pictured with NYSUT President Andy Pallotta) joins several other educators in the state Legislature, including social worker and newly elected Assemblymember-elect Chantel Jackson, D-Bronx, a member of the United Federation of Teachers.



Federal wish list puts students, educators first

By Sylvia Saunders
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Education advocates are looking forward to big changes on the federal front.

While the most visible change will be the appointment of a new education secretary, union leaders are hoping the Biden administration will also provide a new level of support for public education, from pre-K through college.

"We're expecting a commitment to strengthen and invest in public education," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "We have a lengthy wish list."

Topping the agenda is a COVID-19 relief package with significant aid to schools, towns, cities and states, so they can recoup pandemic expenses and help schools recover from the devastating academic and social effects on students.

"The digital divide is real and must be closed," Pallotta said. "Too many students are lacking access to high-speed internet or devices. Even after the pandemic is over, remote

access is a basic necessity."

A similar investment is needed for modernization of school buildings. The pandemic exposed the poor condition of too many school buildings — old heating systems, cramped spaces, a lack of ventilation and windows that can't open. Federal funding is desperately needed so all schools can reopen safely.

Other initiatives on our federal wish list include:

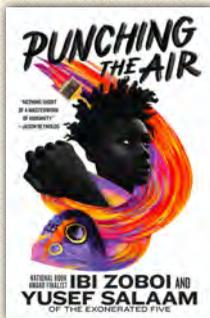
- Increase funding for Title 1 programs, special education services and community schools;
- Expand Universal Pre-K for all 3- and 4-year-olds;
- Double the number of psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals in schools;
- Expand access to higher education with debt-free public colleges;

- Strengthen the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program;
- End the federal education agency's obsession with standardized tests;
- Invest in meaningful professional learning opportunities, teacher recruitment and retention;
- Protections for DREAMers, or young undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children; and
- Restore the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, to promote racial and social justice.

Punching the Air

Written by Ibi Zoboi with Yusef Salaam

Recommended for: 8th graders through high schoolers



Recommended by: Alicia Abdul, high school librarian, Albany Public School Teachers Association

Why I chose this book: This is a freshly published verse novel with a focus on social justice through a collaboration between two powerhouses: one author, one activist. Humanizing the struggle of one young man's fight against racism and bias, its timeliness emerges through the skill of word choice and imagery.

What I like best: The verse format manages to center readers quickly to deliver a searing, but non-biographical portrayal of a Black boy fighting against an unjust criminal justice system that has incarcerated him. The character-driven story allows readers to empathize with Amal.

How teachers can use this book: Amal uses art to communicate, especially now that his voice has been taken away while imprisoned. This powerful example of having an outlet can help with social emotional learning. It pairs with books such as Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*, where protagonists were facing insurmountable trauma and used art to work through it.

About the authors: Ibi Zoboi is the author of several middle grade and young adult books, including her National Book Award finalist *American Street*. Yusef Salaam was one of the Exonerated Five who has gone on to become a prison reform activist and public speaker.

"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 liza.frenette@nysut.org.

Authors, tween fans face off

By Kara Smith
kara.smith@nysut.org

For author Steve Sheinkin, isolation is one of the hardest parts of the coronavirus pandemic. Forced to cancel his regular schedule of 20 to 25 annual school visits, the Newbery Honor winning author of *Bomb* missed seeing students and teachers. "I didn't think answering questions online was very creative," said Sheinkin who longed to create a virtual community.

He reached out to Stacey Rattner, a librarian at Castleton Elementary School, whom he'd met eight years ago during an author visit. "I consider Stacey a super librarian," said Sheinkin.

Rattner, a Schodack Faculty Association member, suggested going bigger. "Steve originally just wanted to ask authors questions about their book, but I said, 'we need a kid in there,'" she said, explaining how the pair brainstormed "Author Fan Face-off," a game-show-themed book trivia program airing Monday



Johnny Marciano takes on sixth-grade superfan Max Abdul. The two answered trivia questions about Marciano's book *Klawde: Evil Alien Warlord Cat* on an episode of "Author Fan Face-off."

mornings on YouTube. It pits a tween-age superfan against a book author in a *Jeopardy!*-like showdown.

Since August, nearly 25 different authors have competed against pint-sized opponents from schools as far flung as Missouri, Toronto and California to determine who knows more about their book — the author or the superfan.

"Katherine Applegate, author of *The One and Only Ivan*, got crushed in her episode," said Sheinkin, noting that most authors don't mind being outplayed by a pre-teen. "I think it's beautiful when the fan becomes the greater expert than the author."

Since both Sheinkin and Rattner have strong connections in the

student book world, they recruit authors through tweets, notes and personal connections. Authors scheduled for 2021 include Kwame Alexander, Jewell Parker Rhodes, Pam Muñoz Ryan and Trenton Lee Stewart.

Rattner suggests incorporating the program into lessons by having students read a featured book and then watch the "Author Fan Face-off" episode.

"The program helps me stay connected with my middle-grade readers since I don't get to meet with them due to COVID-19," she said noting that at roughly 10 minutes long, the programs work well at the beginning or end of a class session.

Sheinkin suggests having students read the book and then play along with the episode to see how they fare against the author. "It's about making reading fun — educators and authors are allies," he said.

Check out "Author Fan Face-off" at [youtube.com/SteveSheinkin1](https://www.youtube.com/SteveSheinkin1). To nominate a student competitor or share a suggestion, contact Rattner (@staceybethr) and Sheinkin (@SteveSheinkin) on Twitter.

[REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY 2021]

Plans underway for RA 2021

The NYSUT Board of Directors will meet this month to finalize plans for the 2021 NYSUT Representative Assembly and Local and Retiree Council Presidents Conference, scheduled for April 29–May 1.

"Our team is planning for every possible contingency," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "So, whether we ultimately meet in person, connect remotely, or experience the RA

and presidents conference with some combination of the two, our delegates will have the opportunity to come together in solidarity to represent our members and conduct the business of our union."

RA delegates will elect NEA state directors and NEA RA delegates. The RA will also honor the winners of the union constituency awards,



"Not for Ourselves Alone:" The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award, the social justice recognition award, community service awards and the Lifeline Honor Roll.

For the most up-to-date info on the RA, including upcoming deadlines for submitting resolutions and amendments to the NYSUT Constitution and Bylaws, visit [nysut.org/ra](https://www.nysut.org/ra).

POSITIONS TO BE FILLED AT THE NYSUT RA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT AN ELECTION FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED ON FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021 AT 5 P.M. DURING THE 2021 NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY AT THE NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER EMPIRE STATE PLAZA, ALBANY, N.Y. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BELOW.

IF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO NECESSITATE GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLIC GATHERINGS, THEREBY PROHIBITING AN IN-PERSON REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY, IN ORDER TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE NYSUT CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND ALL APPLICABLE LAWS, A MAIL-BALLOT ELECTION FOR THE POSITIONS OUTLINED BELOW WILL BE CONDUCTED UPON THE CONCLUSION OF THE 2021 NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES OUTLINED HEREIN.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN THAT NOMINATING PETITIONS FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED THROUGH 5 P.M., FRIDAY, FEB. 12, 2021, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES OUTLINED BELOW.

I. NEA STATE DIRECTOR AND ALTERNATE STATE DIRECTOR

(To be elected by all in-service delegates¹ from NYSUT locals representing NEA Active members)

- Elect one (1) NEA State Director to the NEA Board of Directors, three-year term.
- Elect one (1) Alternate NEA State Director to the NEA Board of Directors, three-year term.

A. Term of Office: Three (3) year term commencing Sept. 1, 2021 and concluding Aug. 31, 2024.

Important Notice

The NEA's governance documents provide that the successful candidate for NEA State Director will serve as an *ex-officio* delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly for all purposes, except nominating candidates for office and voting in elections for NEA officers.

B. Eligibility Requirements for Nomination and Candidacy: All members of NYSUT who hold Active membership in the NEA may nominate a candidate and be a candidate for NEA Director or

¹ "In-service delegates" are delegates who were nominated by, and elected by the in-service NYSUT members of a NYSUT local. "Retiree delegates" are delegates who were nominated, elected by and from the NYSUT Retiree Councils (NYSUT Bylaw C (2)(c)).

Alternate Director. To be eligible, candidates must also have two (2) years of Active membership in the NEA by the date of the election.

C. Elector Qualifications: Each credentialed 2021 NYSUT RA in-service delegate who represents NEA Active members shall be eligible to cast a ballot for NEA Director and Alternate NEA Director. In order to be eligible to vote at the NYSUT Representative Assembly a delegate must be registered by 4 p.m. on April 30, 2021 and must be present at her/his assigned voting locations on April 30, 2021 by 5 p.m. (or 15 minutes after the close of the session should it run beyond 5 p.m.). Instructions on voting and distribution of ballots will be announced by the NYSUT Elections Committee Chair before the close of General Session #1 on April 30, 2021.

If the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate government restrictions on public gatherings and an in-person Representative Assembly cannot be held, an alternative web-based program will be developed. Electors will be those 2021 NYSUT RA in-service delegates who are registered and credentialed for the web-based program.

D. Tabulation: The NEA Director and Alternate Director shall be elected by a secret ballot vote of the qualified electors, pursuant to NYSUT *Constitution* Article VIII §§ 1(c), 1(d) and 4(e) and Bylaw C(1)(b). The candidate for the NEA Director position with the highest vote total shall be declared elected to the NEA Board of Directors. The candidate for the NEA Alternate Director position with the highest vote total shall be declared elected to the NEA Board of Directors Alternate Director position.

II. NEA RA STATE DELEGATES

(To be elected by all in-service delegates from NYSUT locals representing NEA Active members)

- Elect approximately 37 NEA RA State delegates

The exact number of NEA State delegates to which NYSUT is entitled has not yet been officially determined by the NEA. NYSUT's NEA State delegate entitlement will be set by the NEA in late January 2021. The above estimate is subject to modification once the official State delegate entitlement for NYSUT is announced by the NEA.

A. Term of Office: The term of office shall commence as of the close of the 2021 NYSUT RA and conclude as of the close of the 2024 NYSUT Representative Assembly.

B. Eligibility Requirements for Nomination and Candidacy: All members of NYSUT who hold Active

membership in the NEA may nominate a candidate and be a candidate for NYSUT State delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

C. Elector Qualifications: Each credentialed 2021 NYSUT RA in-service delegate who represents NEA Active members shall be eligible to cast a ballot for NYSUT State delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly.

In order to be eligible to vote at the NYSUT Representative Assembly a delegate must be registered by 4 p.m. on April 30, 2021 and must be present at her/his assigned voting locations on April 30, 2021 by 5 p.m. (or 15 minutes after the close of the session should it run beyond 5 p.m.). Instructions on voting and distribution of ballots will be announced by the NYSUT Elections Committee Chair before the close of General Session #1 on April 30, 2021.

If the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate government restrictions on public gatherings and an in-person Representative Assembly cannot be held, an alternative web-based program will be developed. Electors will be those 2021 NYSUT RA in-service delegates who are registered and credentialed for the web-based program.

D. Tabulation: NYSUT State delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly shall be elected by a secret ballot vote of the eligible electors, pursuant to NYSUT *Constitution* Article VIII §§1(c) and (1)(d) and Bylaw C(1)(b). The number of candidates receiving the highest number of votes corresponding to the number of delegate positions necessary to fill NYSUT's entire NEA RA State delegate entitlement, shall be declared elected to the position of NYSUT State Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

POSITIONS TO BE FILLED OUTSIDE OF THE NYSUT RA

III. NEA RA RETIRED DELEGATES

(To be elected by NEA Retired members²)

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN THAT THE TALLY OF A MAIL BALLOT ELECTION FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED ON APRIL 19, 2021 AT 10:30 A.M. AT THE NYSUT HEADQUARTERS, LATHAM, NEW YORK, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BELOW.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN

² Inasmuch as the vast majority of the electors eligible to cast ballots in the NEA Retired delegate election (i.e. NEA Retired members) are not delegates to the NYSUT RA, a mail secret ballot will be conducted by the NYSUT Elections Committee for the election of NEA Retired delegates.

THAT NOMINATIONS FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE NYSUT ELECTIONS COMMITTEE THROUGH 5 P.M. FRIDAY, FEB. 12, 2021, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CRITERIA OUTLINED BELOW.

A. Positions to be filled: Elect NYSUT's four (4) NEA Retired delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (subject to notification from NEA of any change in NYSUT's final NEA Retired Delegate entitlement).

B. Eligibility Requirements for Nomination and Candidacy: Each NEA Retired member included in the NEA retiree membership roster, as provided to NYSUT and which resulted in NYSUT's NEA Retired delegate entitlement, shall be eligible to nominate a candidate and serve as a candidate for NEA Retired delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

C. Term of Office: The term of office shall commence as of the close of the 2021 NYSUT RA and conclude as of the close of the 2024 NYSUT Representative Assembly.

D. Elector Qualifications: Each NEA Retired member included in the NEA retiree membership roster as of March 8, 2021, as provided to NYSUT and which resulted in NYSUT's NEA Retired delegate entitlement, shall be eligible to cast a ballot for NYSUT's NEA Retired delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly.

E. Mailing of Ballots: The ballots for the NEA Retired delegate election will be mailed on or about March 22, 2021 to the eligible electors at their address of record (as of March 8, 2021 at 5 p.m.)

F. Tabulation: NYSUT's NEA Retired delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly shall be elected by a secret ballot mail vote of the electors.

The number of candidates receiving the highest number of votes corresponding to the number of delegate positions necessary to fill NYSUT's entire NEA Retired delegate entitlement shall be declared elected to the position of NEA Retired delegate. Alternate NEA Retired delegates shall be the remaining candidates and shall be ranked in the order (highest to lowest) of the number of votes received.

IV. OTHER CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION PROCEDURES

A. General Candidate Qualification & Nomination procedures for all Offices

1. Candidate Qualifications: A candidate is any member in good standing who meets the above candidate eligibility criteria, the nomination requirements for the position and fulfills the requirements listed below.

2. Availability of Nominating Petitions: Nominating Petitions for all positions

may be obtained from the Elections Committee commencing Jan. 4, 2021 by contacting the NYSUT Elections Committee at NYSUT Headquarters either in writing (800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, New York 12110-2455); by telephone 800-342-9810; or by email to elections@nysut.org.

3. Acceptance of Candidacy/Candidate Name Verification/Candidate Contact Information:

Acceptance of Nomination: In order to qualify as a candidate for any position, the candidate must signify his/her acceptance of the nomination by signing the Acceptance of Candidacy portion of the Nominating Petition.

Name Verification: Each candidate should also indicate on the Nominating Petition the manner in which his/her name should be printed on the election ballot.

Contact Information: All candidates are asked to provide both their personal (i.e. non-employer) email address (if available) and cellphone number (or home telephone number, if there is no cellphone) on the Nominating Petition to enable the NYSUT Elections Committee to readily contact them.

4. Candidates' Ability to Verify Election Committee's Receipt of Nominating Petition:

The Elections Committee will notify nominees either by email (if available), or by telephone, that their Petition has been received and validated by the Committee. Nominees for any position who wish to verify the Election Committee's receipt of their nominating petition may contact the NYSUT Elections Committee at NYSUT Headquarters either in writing (800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, New York 12110-2455); by telephone 800-342-9810; or by email request to elections@nysut.org.

5. Multiple Candidacies: In addition to serving as an elected NEA State Delegate, no member may be a nominee for more than one elected NYSUT position, except candidates for AFT State Delegate and AFT Alternate State Delegate may be a candidate for one additional elected NYSUT position.

6. Observers: All candidates shall have the right to be present or to have an observer at each polling location at the Representative Assembly and at the tabulation of ballots.

B. Candidate Qualification, Nomination & Election Procedure for each Office

1. Nomination Procedure: A nominee is any member who meets the above candidate eligibility requirements for the

position and fulfills the requirements for nomination listed below.

Nominating Petitions:
NEA Board of Directors and NEA Alternate Director Candidates: A Nominating Petition, signed by fifty (50) Active NEA members must be submitted to the NYSUT Elections Committee **by 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021.**

State Delegate Candidates to the NEA Representative Assembly: A Nominating Petition, signed by fifty (50) Active NEA members must be received by the NYSUT Elections Committee **by 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021.**

NEA Retired Delegate Candidates to the NEA Representative Assembly: A Nominating Petition, signed by twenty-five (25) NEA Retired members from the NEA retiree membership roster, which was used by the NEA as the basis for NYSUT's NEA Retired delegate allocation, must be received by the NYSUT Elections Committee **by 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021.**

Due to the potential for continuing government restrictions on public meeting and gathering, signatures for nominating petitions may be collected electronically. Further information will be available on the nominating petition.

2. Uncontested Election: An election may be waived by the Elections Committee for any position if, following the period of open nominations, the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled.³ In such instance, the NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer shall cast a single vote for the candidate and the candidate shall then be deemed elected by the Elections Committee.

V. PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION AND CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION PROCEDURES

This Notice of Nomination and Election and Campaign & Election Procedures will appear in the **January/February 2021** issue of *NYSUT United*.

A reminder of the **January/February 2021 NYSUT United** publication of this Notice of Nomination and Election and Campaign & Election Procedures shall also be published in the January issues and the Feb. 5 issue of the *NYSUT Leader Briefing*.

VI. CANDIDATES' ACCESS TO MAILING LABELS AND THE SUBMISSION OF CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS FOR THE "ELECTION ISSUE" OF NYSUT UNITED

Any candidate who completes and submits a valid Nominating Petition to the

³ See, NEA Bylaw 5-1.a

NYSUT Elections Committee by no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021 shall be eligible: (a) to access and affix the mailing labels of eligible electors for campaign purposes at the NYSUT regional office designated by the candidate, and/or (b) to promote his/her candidacy by submitting a campaign statement for publication in the March/April 2021 *NYSUT United* "Election Issue."

Mailing labels and appropriate office space in a common area will be provided to any candidate at the NYSUT regional office designated by the candidate on his or her Nominating Petition, to affix the mailing labels of eligible electors on materials for campaign purposes. It shall be the sole responsibility of individual candidates to produce their campaign material, supply adequate postage and meet any other requirements of the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery service selected by the candidate, regarding the delivery of such materials. The designated NYSUT regional office shall take all reasonable steps to mail the material or to deliver it to such other delivery service selected by the candidate. Mailing labels shall not be taken from the regional office, reproduced or otherwise distributed.

A. Elector Mailing Labels

(1) Candidates for NEA RA Retired Delegate are eligible to use mailing labels of eligible electors provided the candidates so indicated on the Nominating Petition. The mailing labels will be available in the regional office designated by the candidate during the week of March 15, 2021. Candidates will be notified by the regional office when the labels are available.

(2) Candidates for State Director, Alternate State Director and NEA RA State Delegate are eligible to use mailing labels of the eligible electors provided the candidates so indicated on the Nominating Petition. The applicable delegate mailing labels will be available in the NYSUT regional office designated by the candidate during the week of March 22, 2021. Candidates will be notified by the regional office when the labels are available.

All mailing labels are confidential and privileged information and shall not be taken from the regional office, reproduced or shared with anyone. Candidates should contact the committee at elections@nysut.org if they have not been contacted by the regional office regarding mailing labels, during the week of March 15, 2021 (candidates for NEA RA Retired Delegate), or March 22, 2021 (candidates for all other offices).

Provided, however that in lieu of accessing and affixing mailing labels at a NYSUT

regional office, a candidate may use a bona fide outside mailing service to deliver campaign material to eligible electors, pursuant to the following procedures:

(1) Such candidate shall notify the NYSUT Elections Committee of the name and contact information for the outside mailing service by listing that information on his or her Nominating Petition; and

(2) Within 48 hours of receipt of the Nomination Petition or as soon thereafter as practicable, the NYSUT Elections Committee shall contact the candidate, and the outside mailing service using the contact information provided by the candidate, to obtain any written assurance the Committee may require in order to prevent the reproduction or unauthorized distribution of member data.

After the receipt of such written assurances as the NYSUT Elections Committee shall require, the Committee shall arrange for the electronic delivery of data directly to the mailing service.

B. NYSUT United "Election Issue"

The March/April 2021 issue of *NYSUT United* shall be the "Election Issue" which may be used by a candidate to promote his/her candidacy, provided the qualified candidate submits his/her campaign statement and their Nominating Petition, both of which are to be validated by the Elections Committee, by no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021.

Candidate statements shall be submitted to the Elections Committee. Electronic submissions are preferred and shall be sent to the Elections Committee at elections@nysut.org. Candidate statements may also be sent to the Elections Committee by fax (518-213-6411) or in hard copy (NYSUT Elections Committee, C/O Office of the President, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455).

Any words that extend beyond the allowable space will be deleted and not published as part of the candidate statement. The Editor of *NYSUT United* maintains the right to alter the format, font, print style or any other formatting to ensure uniformity in the presentation of all candidate statements.

Please note that candidates are solely responsible for the grammar and content of their statements.

Space in the March/April 2021 "Election Issue" of the *NYSUT United* for campaign statements shall be allocated as follows:

Position	Space	Photos Published	Order of Statement
NEA State Director	50 words	Yes	Candidates will be listed alphabetically
NEA Alternate State Director	50 words	Yes	Candidates will be listed alphabetically
NEA State Delegate	50 words	Yes	Candidates will be listed alphabetically
NEA Retired Delegate	50 words	Yes	Candidates will be listed alphabetically
Position	Space	Photos Published	Order of Statement
Complete Caucus Slate	1,600 words	Yes	Candidates will be listed alphabetically
Incomplete Caucus Slate	Proportionate space (not to exceed the space listed alphabetically allocated to the candidates as individuals)	Yes	Candidates will be listed alphabetically

In addition to the uncharged space provided above, a full listing of candidates for the positions of NEA State Director, NEA Alternate State Director, NEA State Delegate and NEA Retired State Delegate will also be published in the "Election Issue" of *NYSUT United*.

C. Caucus Slate Campaign Statements

Organizations wishing to be identified by the Elections Committee as a caucus under the Campaign and Election Procedures and thereby be eligible to have a caucus identified campaign statement published in the March/April 2021 "Election Issue" of the *NYSUT United* shall request, properly complete and timely return a Caucus Notification Form to the Elections Committee. That form is available from the NYSUT Elections Committee. The deadline for the submission to the Elections Committee of a completed Caucus Notification Form as well as the caucus identified campaign statement, which are to be validated by the Elections Committee, is 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021.

Caucus-identified campaign page(s) or a portion of a page (if partial slate) will be assigned on the basis of a drawing by the Election Committee; independent announced candidates will follow and will be arranged alphabetically for each position, and separately listed as described below.

Note: Any candidate whose name is included in a published (uncharged) caucus-identified campaign statement shall be ineligible to have an individual (uncharged) campaign statement also published.

D. Option to Purchase Space in *NYSUT United* "Election Issue"

In addition to a candidate being allocated uncharged space in the *NYSUT United* "Election Issue" under the above criteria (either individually or as a part of a caucus statement), a candidate who has

submitted a validated Nominating Petition by no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021 may purchase additional space in the *NYSUT United* "Election Issue." This space will be charged as an advertisement and printed in the advertisement portion of *NYSUT United*, separate and apart from the uncharged space provided in Subdivision B above. The cost of that purchased space will be based upon the *NYSUT United*'s standard advertisement house rates and policy.

Please note that candidates may NOT purchase additional space as part of the uncharged space provided for in Subdivision B above. Any candidate interested in purchasing additional space must provide the copy to be published in the March/April 2021 *NYSUT United* "Election Issue" to *NYSUT United* Editor at united@nysut.org by no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021. Additional information regarding the *NYSUT United*'s standard advertising house rates and policy may be obtained by telephoning the *NYSUT United* at 800-342-9810 or by email to united@nysut.org.

VII. NOMINEES' FORUM

Statewide Offices Nominees' Forum

Nominees for NEA Director, NEA Alternate Director and NEA State Delegates ("statewide offices") shall be given the opportunity to speak to the RA delegates during a Nominees' Forum. In order to be eligible to participate in a Nominees' Forum for any of the statewide offices, a candidate must complete and return the Statewide Offices' Nominees' Forum Participant Request Form to the Elections Committee by no later than 5 p.m. on March 22, 2021. The time allocated shall be divided equally among the nominees for the same position. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot. Groups of nominees may pool their time.

VIII. CAMPAIGNING AT THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Campaign material shall not be distributed on the Representative Assembly Convention Floor or as otherwise limited by the Rules of Procedure for the 2021 Representative Assembly, as approved by the Board of Directors and as adopted by the delegates at the 2021 Representative Assembly.

Campaigning at the NYSUT Representative Assembly shall end on April 30, 2021 at 4:45 p.m.

Pursuant to Article VIII (1)(f) of the NYSUT Constitution, the NYSUT Elections Committee shall have the authority to resolve any and all issues or disputes involving any election.

IX. STAFF RESTRICTIONS, CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS & LIMITED CANDIDATE SERVICES

NYSUT staff members are prohibited by law from campaigning for any candidate. Therefore, no candidate should request any campaign assistance from any NYSUT staff member.

No portion of dues money at the local, state or national level shall be used, directly or indirectly, to promote the candidacy of any person for any elected office.

Contributions may be received by a candidate only from individual persons or groups of individuals. No employer whatsoever (including, but not limited to, other unions, commercial firms, non-profit organizations, law firms, and businesses) may contribute money, goods, services, or anything of value, to promote directly or indirectly, the candidacy of any person for any elected office.

In conducting their election campaign no candidate or anyone acting on behalf of a candidate shall utilize any funds, facilities, equipment, stationery, supplies or resources (including, but not limited to, computers, email systems, computer networks, electronic media, telephones, supplies, photocopiers or fax machines) which are financed by, owned or leased by NYSUT (except as provided below), or any of its national or local affiliates.

NYSUT through its Elections Committee will (subject to availability, *i.e.* NYSUT is not obliged to purchase equipment if not otherwise available) make limited services equally accessible to all candidates and caucuses (the cost of which incurred by NYSUT is to be paid to NYSUT). The exclusive limited services which will be made equally available by the Elections Committee to candidates and caucuses are as follows: (a) use of a table with chairs, and easels, in the vicinity of the convention hall for campaigning; (b) meeting space

totaling not more than three (3) hours during the entire period of the Representative Assembly (Friday-Saturday); (c) use of a fax machine; and (d) photocopying; *provided that* NYSUT is fully compensated for all cost incurred by NYSUT (as determined, in writing, by NYSUT) for the limited services utilized, and *provided further that* such services are available. All candidates and caucuses shall have equal access to receive all such limited services, and all reasonable requests will be honored, subject to the above qualifications. No alcohol, food or refreshments will be permitted in any meeting space made available to candidates by the Election Committee. Any candidate who is endorsed by a caucus shall be ineligible to receive individual candidate services under these provisions whenever the caucus receives such services. Should either a candidate or a caucus wish to utilize any of these limited services, the Services Request Form (and additionally, in the case of a caucus, a proper Caucus Notification Form) shall be completed, signed, received and validated by the NYSUT Elections Committee, all by not later than 5 p.m. on March 22, 2021.

If due to unforeseen circumstances (*e.g.* scheduling, equipment limitations or unavailability), the Elections Committee determines that any of the above-described limited services need to be revised or modified, all eligible candidates and caucuses that have timely submitted the Services Request Form shall be promptly notified by the Elections Committee of the change. In such event, the Elections Committee will take reasonable means and measures to arrange comparable services so that there is no disparate treatment among any of the candidates, recognizing that if any costs are incurred by NYSUT in making alternate arrangements available, such are to be borne by the requesting candidate(s) and/or caucus(es).

The cost of all services received by every candidate and every caucus shall be reimbursed to NYSUT within thirty (30) days of the candidate's or caucus's receipt of NYSUT's written statement of services.

X. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The NYSUT Elections Committee shall have the authority to interpret and apply these Campaign and Election Procedures. The NYSUT Elections Committee shall be empowered to modify the procedures and timelines in the event of extenuating or unforeseen circumstances, or pursuant to the requirements of either law or NYSUT's affiliates. Notification shall be provided in the event there is a material change in these procedures or timelines.

[RA 2021 CAMPAIGN & ELECTIONS PROCEDURES]

XI. CONDUCTING ELECTION

All elections shall be conducted in accordance with the following instructions, and those provided by the NYSUT Elections Committee.

A. Time and Date of Elections

In order to be eligible to vote at the NYSUT Representative Assembly a delegate must be registered by 4 p.m. on April 30, 2021 and must be present at her/his assigned voting locations on April 30, 2021 by 5 p.m. (or 15 minutes after the close of the session should it run beyond 5 p.m.). Instructions on voting and distribution of ballots will be announced by the NYSUT Elections Committee Chair before the close of General Session #1 on April 30, 2021.

If the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate government restrictions on public gatherings and an in-person Representative Assembly cannot be held, an alternative web-based program will be developed. A delegate must be registered and credentialed for the web-based program in order to be eligible to receive a mail-in ballot for voting.

B. Voting Tabulation & Elections Reporting

Write-in votes will not be counted nor be part of any tabulation.

The Elections Committee will use all reasonable efforts to make the certified election results available to candidates requesting such information, before any results are announced during the following General Session, provided the candidate has provided to the Election Committee,

in advance, their cell telephone number, another telephone number, or an email address.

To the maximum extent practicable, certified election results will be announced during the General Session held following the tabulation of votes by the Elections Committee.

All candidates will receive official notification of the certified election results from the Election Committee as soon as practicable. The certified election results and vote total per candidate will be reported in the next available *NYSUT United* and posted at nysut.org. However, roll call voting by delegates will not be released for any secret ballot elections.

Observers of the tabulation process shall be afforded the opportunity to receive the results either electronically or in writing after the candidates have been notified of the results.

C. Runoff Procedure

In the event of a tie vote in an election to fill a vacancy in the position of NEA State Director, NEA Alternate State Director, and/or NEA State Delegate, a run-off election or run-off elections will be held until such time as a candidate or candidates receive the highest number of votes for each vacant position as prescribed herein.

In the event that a run-off election or run-off elections need to be held for a statewide office, the run-off election or run-off elections will be held Saturday, May 1, 2021 at a time to be announced by the Elections Committee Chair at the

beginning of General Session #2.

If the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate government restrictions on public gatherings, an in-person Representative Assembly cannot be held, and there is a tie vote in the mail ballot election held to fill a vacancy in the position of NEA State Director, NEA Alternate State Director, and/or NEA State Delegate, a run-off election(s) will be held by subsequent mail-ballot vote.

D. Observers

Candidates may observe or designate an observer(s) to observe the voting and tabulation process. Observers need not be elected delegates or alternates to the Representative Assembly. Observers may observe the voting and/or tabulation process subject to the following conditions:

(1) Voting: Any candidate may observe or designate an observer(s) to observe the voting process at each polling location.

(2) Tabulation: Any candidate may observe or designate an observer for the tabulation process. The Chair of the NYSUT Elections Committee retains the right due to logistical concerns to limit the number of observers in the tabulation room, however, every candidate for election shall have the right to have at least one observer in the tabulation room.

Each candidate must register the name of each observer with the NYSUT Elections Committee before 4:45 p.m. on April 30, 2021. Observers are required to show photo identification to a representative of

the NYSUT Elections Committee and each observer will be issued a special observer badge that must be displayed at all times during the voting and tabulation process. No observer will be allowed to observe voting or enter the tabulation room without the special observer badge.

If the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate government restrictions on public gatherings, and an in-person Representative Assembly cannot be held, additional instructions for registering observers will be provided.

XII. FORMS & INFORMATION

Forms and information are available from: NYSUT Elections Committee, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455; phone 800-342-9810; or by email request to elections@nysut.org.

Items available as specified within the Campaign and Election Procedures from the NYSUT Elections Committee are listed below. (This is not an order form.)

■ Nominating Petition for:

- NEA Director
- NEA Alternate Director
- NEA State Delegate
- NEA Retired Delegate

■ Nominees' Forum Participant Request Form

■ Candidate and Caucus Services Request Form

■ Caucus Notification Form

Completed forms must be returned to the NYSUT Elections Committee as specified above.

[RETIREE COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS]

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related government restrictions on large-group gatherings, a number of previously scheduled retiree council elections meetings were rescheduled for September and October in order to complete the nominations and elections process for retiree council officers and delegates. Listed below are the results of these elections. Congratulations to the newly elected retiree council officers and delegates from around the state and thank you to all the candidates and members who participated in the elections process. For more information, contact geralyn.oreilly@nysut.org.

RC 1: President: Kathy Brown; Vice President: Lynn Mele; Secretary/Treasurer: Linda Ulrich Hagner; NYSUT Delegates: Kathy Brown, Lynn Mele, Linda Ulrich Hagner; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Nancy Keller, Linda Lichtenthal, Maxine Knisley; AFT Delegates: Kathy Brown, Lynn Mele, Linda Ulrich Hagner

RC 2: President: Eva Mroczka; Vice President: Rose Furman; Secretary/Treasurer: Joanne Smith; NYSUT Delegates: Eva Mroczka, Rose Furman, Joanne Smith; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Liz Dolce, Mark Shanahan, Janet Utz; AFT Delegates: Eva Mroczka, Rose Furman, Joanne Smith

RC 3: President: Veronica Cavan; Vice President: Arlene Reese; Secretary/Treasurer: David D'Amato; NYSUT Delegates: Veronica Cavan, Arlene Reese, David D'Amato; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Mary-Lou Mancuso-Whalen, Ann Kennedy; AFT Delegates: Veronica Cavan, Arlene Reese, David D'Amato

RC 6: President: Margaret Bartolotti; Vice President: Bev Voos; Secretary: Dan Sanfratello; Treasurer: Mary Moss; NYSUT Delegates: Margaret Bartolotti, Dianne Herrick, Bev Voos; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Jeanne Coonan, Mary Daly

RC 7: President: Loretta Donlon; First Vice President: Candace Johnson; Second Vice President: William Spreter; Secretary: Melody Mariani; Treasurer: Carol Graham; Board of Directors: Paul Farfaglia, Lilli Rastegar, Mary Hanus, Ed O'Rourke, Philip DelloStritto; NYSUT Delegates: Loretta Donlon, Margo Buckingham, Candace Johnson; AFT Delegate: Loretta Donlon; AFT Alternate Delegate: Margo Buckingham

RC 9: President: Lynn Hunneyman; Vice President: Rod Sherman; Secretary: Carol Lawrence; Treasurer: John Clancey; NYSUT Delegates: Lynn Hunneyman, Phyllis Doane, Joe Vernon

RC 10: President: Barbara McCarthy; First Vice President: Joe Sano; Second Vice President (SRP): Ann Cherney; Secretary: Laraine Gillette; Treasurer: Mary Kruchinski; NYSUT Delegates: Barbara McCarthy, Mary Kruchinski, Bonita Maxon; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Celine Casey, Deb Escobar,

Jane Weihe; AFT Delegate: Jim Stolis; AFT Alternate Delegate: Bonita Maxon; Membership Director: Davia Dymond; Travel Program: Karen Maher; Webmaster/Newsletter Editor: Deb Escobar

RC 11: President: Andrew Kavulich; Vice President: Timothy Cooper; Secretary: Janice Strauss; Treasurer: Richard Escott; NYSUT Delegates: Andrew Kavulich, Loretta Curtin, Timothy Cooper; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Susan Sklenarik, Tred Burch, Karen Avedisian; AFT Delegate: Andrew Kavulich; AFT Alternate Delegate: Loretta Curtin

RC 14: President: Howard Kasen; Vice Presidents: Nick Karnavezos, David Cantor; Secretary: Yvon Leroy; Treasurer: Terri Meyer; NYSUT Delegates: Howard Kasen, Terri Meyer, Diane Tracy; NYSUT Alternate Delegates: Paul Ellis Graham, Yvon Leroy, Maria Rossi; AFT Delegate: Howard Kasen; AFT Alternate Delegate: Terri Meyer

[RC ELECTION
RESULTS CONT.]

RC 19: Co-Presidents: Rosemary Catanzariti, Louise Levine; Vice President: William Toto; Vice President Emerita: Carol Rubin; Secretary: Maureen Tracy; Treasurer: MaryAnne Cariello; NYSUT Delegates: Rosemary Catanzariti, Louise Levine, Mathilda Wolfson; NYSUT Alternate Delegate: MaryAnne Cariello; AFT Delegate: Rosemary Catanzariti; AFT Alternate Delegate: Louise Levine

RC 22: President: Terry Kalb; Secretary: Christine Wasko; Treasurer: Bill Rockwell; NYSUT Delegates: Terry Kalb, Rosemary Brennan; AFT Delegates: Terry Kalb, Rosemary Brennan

RC 23: President: Ellen Burke; Vice President: Matthew Weichner; Secretary: Regina Symansky; Treasurer: Richard Friend; NYSUT Delegates: Ellen Burke, Fred Pitrelli, June Smith; NYSUT Alternate Delegate: Matthew Weichner; AFT Delegate: Ellen Burke; AFT Alternate Delegate: June Smith

RC 43: President: Felicia Brue; Treasurer: Marsha Friedman; Membership/Secretary: Miriam Hanan; Vote-Cope: Tom Galli; RC Newsletter: Cheryl Dodes

RC 45: President: Vicki Darrow; First Vice President: Gail VanPatten; Second Vice President: Susan Connelly; Secretary: OPEN; Treasurer: Maxine Cleveland; Board of Directors: Chris Frare, Tom Gath, Tracie Johnstone, Diana Torta, OPEN; NYSUT Delegates: Vicki Darrow, Diana Torta, OPEN; AFT Delegate: OPEN

RC 46: President: Cathie Jacobus; Vice President: Carol Olszewski; Secretary: Warren Conklin; Treasurer: Jim Jacobus; NYSUT Delegates: Tim Frawley, Cheryl Jordan; NYSUT Alternate Delegate: Jim Jacobus; Board Members: Judy McInerney, Kevin McInerney, Joe Rolls, Keith Willes, Connie Lazoration

Have a teacher strike memory? Share it!

By Kara Smith
kara.smith@nysut.org

Long Island teacher locals have a long history of strikes and Retiree Council 17 President Ken Ulric wants to ensure it's not forgotten.

The passing of legendary Long Island NYSUT activist Sheila Goldberg in 2020 was a wakeup call. "I realized that we're losing our institutional history as members like Sheila pass," said Ulric. With the election season winding down, Ulric — who heads Nassau County's powerhouse retiree phone banking efforts — was ready for a new challenge. "I want to document these memories for our locals and our union," he said.

In the 1976 Farmingdale Federation of Teachers strike, NYSUT officers and staff and scores of teachers from surrounding Nassau and Suffolk county districts joined their Farmingdale sisters and brothers on the picket line before and after school. "Unique for the time was using walkie talkies and CB radios to coordinate strike lines," said Ulric. Members also noted license plate



numbers to discourage line crossing, a practice that led one group of scabs to travel to school in a funeral hearse to avoid identification. It didn't work.

That same year, the Nassau BOCES Central Council of Teachers went on strike, and some 50 law enforcement officers arrived on motorcycles to disrupt and intimidate picketing unionists.

The Levittown United Teachers' 53-day strike in 1978 remains the longest teacher strike on Long Island. President Martin Cullinan was sentenced to 20 days in the Nassau County correctional facility for his role, a sentence that then-Gov. Hugh Carey commuted after eight days.

Of Long Island's 124 school

districts, roughly 20 percent have struck, and nearly 62 percent of the striking locals have hailed from ED 17. "I'm really proud to be part of one of the most militant election districts on the island," said Ulric.

He plans to interview members and document their stories in a manuscript. As this project is a work in progress, Ulric notes that facts may change as he compiles more information. To keep the project scale manageable, he's focusing solely on Long Island public school teacher strikes, although he realizes several Long Island college educator locals have also struck. "I haven't found any SRP strikes yet," said Ulric.

The 2021 Representative Assembly marks the 30th anniversary of NYSUT's retiree program. The retiree unit began in 1991 to help retired members stay organized and involved in union activities.

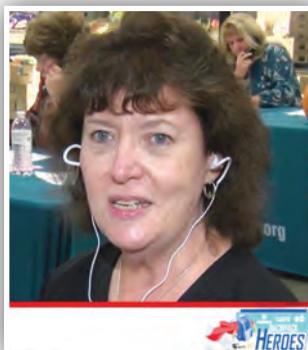
Do you have a story about a Long Island public school teacher strike to share? Contact Ken Ulric at kulric@optonline.net.

Not from Long Island? We want to hear all of your strike stories. Send stories to geralyn.oreilly@nysut.org.



Veronica O'Connor, RC 15-16 president, holds RC member donation checks for Feeding Westchester, Rural Migrant Ministry (farmworkers), NYSUT's Disaster Relief Fund and the Food Pantry of the Hudson Valley.

RC 10 members, including President Barb McCarthy, volunteer at WRGB's Telethon for the Regional Food Bank's Backpack Heroes Program. The group raised and donated nearly \$10,000 to support 30 schools.



PHOTOS 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

Ruth Shippee, 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

Claire Zatorski, 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

A seat at the table

NYSUT website tracks in-school COVID concerns

As we flip the calendar to a new year, social distancing, mask wearing and temperature checks are unfortunately still the norm for the foreseeable future. To help members and community residents stay safe, the statewide union in November launched nysutcovidtracker.org, a website that allows school staff members, parents and community members to report coronavirus-related health and safety violations and concerns in schools.

“A consistent flow of information about the safety of our schools is critical for educators, students and families, and this website is designed to help us all stay vigilant as the school year rolls on,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. “Though we know some districts are working closely with their staffs to put health and safety first, problems still exist around the state. By empowering educators and community members to report their concerns, it’s our hope that we can elevate the voices of those who otherwise may go unheard.”

The site features an interactive mapping tool so members can identify regional issues and read submitted reports about individual school districts. Site visitors can also report school concerns and violations using an online form. Now that winter has arrived, proper ventilation, face mask use and cleaning and disinfecting protocols are critical, explained Pallotta.

“We must continue to err on the side of caution. Identifying hot spots can help us do so,” he said, noting that community members need to know about coronavirus-related concerns so they can make informed decisions.

Union voice imperative when navigating workplace hazards

By Liza Frenette
liza.frenette@nysut.org

Educators working in close contact with students, including those with special needs, are often exposed to spitting and crying, which generate airborne particles. Since the coronavirus now sweeping the world is most potent when airborne, there are serious concerns that unions are helping to resolve.

Veronica Foley, NYSUT health and safety specialist, explained that concerns should be brought to administrators, who must share them with mandated health and safety committees. Unresolved concerns can generate a complaint to the Public Employee Safety and Health bureau, run by the New York State Department of Labor. The agency maintains respiratory protection, sanitation, hazard communication and record keeping standards. Complaints falling outside those regulations can be filed under a general duty

violation.

Mike Piccolo, Southern Westchester BOCES, said there are SRP staff who work closely with students with special needs who may not be able to wear masks and can be yelling, crying and spitting — all generating airborne contaminants. Not enough face shields have been provided to staff.

“School staff working in close proximity with unmasked students should be provided with N95s (masks) and included in the school’s respiratory protection program. This is not a requirement based on state guidance, but it is best practice,” Foley said. “Unfortunately most are ignoring this even though we all now know COVID-19 is airborne.”

Custodians may also be using chemicals that require a respirator. SRPs who provide assistance with toileting and breathing apparatus are also at more risk.

Administrators should be approached about getting proper personal protective equipment. If you’re not receiving an adequate response to a complaint and it is a PESH violation, speak to your local union president about filing a PESH

complaint, Foley said.

The State Education Department also mandates a health and safety committee for each district; it must include labor and parents.

“NYSUT helped us form a health and safety committee, and it’s so helpful now,” said Tammy Hughes, East Syracuse-Minoa Teaching Assistants Association. Forming a labor-only committee is key, Foley said, to organize concerns before they are brought to the district committee.

Union power can help with many concerns. Rhonda Harrell, Ossining Support Staff president, said her local was successful getting plexiglass workplace shields where needed; face shields for some support staff; and gowns and gloves for those assisting with toileting. The OSS was also able to get extra pay for security workers and TA’s doing additional COVID-19 related work.

Harrell’s advocacy began with a request to be part of a school re-opening team.

“Because of a NYSUT webinar, I learned that we should have a seat at the table,” she said. “I want support staff to know their voices will be heard.”

Workplace essentials

- If your school identifies that a teacher, school nurse, or SRP needs a respirator, then they need to make sure they are properly fit tested by the employer, and instructed in how to maintain it.
- Sanitizers used in the workplace need dwell time. They cannot be wiped off right away.
- Soap and hand towels need to be in every bathroom.
- Be sure administrators are keeping accurate records. According to Labor Law 27, these must include sicknesses, injuries, etc.
- If a custodian is provided with a new disinfectant to use, be sure that it is accompanied by training. If teaching staff is asked to disinfect then they must receive the same training and PPE that is provided to the custodial staff.
- Check to see if the district is maintaining a required cleaning log.



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[PASSINGS]

Edith "Eadie" Gerber Shanker

Eadie Shanker, a teacher, activist, organizer and founder of the United Federation of Teachers, died Sept. 19; she was 87.

Eadie began her career teaching English at JHS 126 in Queens. Before the UFT was formed, she was a member and organizer with the Teachers Guild.

"Eadie's commitment to labor and education served as an inspiration to scores of unionists," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. "She helped lay the foundation for our union and her work has touched the lives of so many. Eadie will be missed, but her legacy will live on."

"Eadie Shanker was not only a courageous woman who put her

career at stake to found this union, but she remained a lifelong supporter and advocate for public education and social justice," said UFT President Michael Mulgrew.

In 1959, Eadie met fellow educator and union pioneer Al Shanker. The two married in 1961. In addition to her work in the UFT's infancy, Eadie helped establish literacy programs for adults and she worked to create CUNY programs for high school dropout prevention.

In 2012, Eadie received NYSUT's "Not for Ourselves Alone." The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award, which recognizes women who have provided significant service and leadership to their local and state affiliates.

Stephen Burati | Nov. 5, 2020
Wappingers Congress of Teachers

Sebastian Ciancio | Oct. 17, 2020
United University Professions/
Buffalo HSC

Gary DiLallo | Nov. 21, 2020
Mechanicville Teachers
Association

Patricia Enger | Nov. 11, 2020
Sweet Home Education
Association

Joseph M. Hassett | April 3, 2020
United Federation of Teachers

Susan Heffernan | Nov. 28, 2020
Sweet Home Education
Association

Louisa Johnston | June 9, 2020
United Federation of Teachers

Patricia Viola Kelly | Oct. 13, 2020
Wappingers Congress of Teachers

Elizabeth Langiulli
Sept. 24, 2020
United Federation of Teachers

Patrick Longo | Nov. 16, 2020
South Colonie Teachers
Association

Sharon Lubin | November 2020
United Federation of Teachers

Alice Mucha | Oct. 23, 2020
United Federation of Teachers

Chris Pendergast | Oct. 14, 2020
United Teachers of Northport

Stephen Roberts | Sept. 21, 2020
United University Professions/
Buffalo Center

Mildred M. Williams
Sept. 17, 2020
United Federation of Teachers

Obituary submissions must include decedent's full name, union affiliation, date of death, and contact info for the person submitting the notice. Fax notices to 518-213-6415; send to Julie Malec, NYSUT United, 800

“Quotable”



NYS AFL-CIO// #VotersDecided

Congratulations

@mannionfor50! This is a great victory for working people in NY. #UnionStrong (@NYS AFL-CIO)

Yonkers Federation of Teachers

It's a great day for public education in NY! Congratulations to HS science teacher and State Senator-elect John Mannion! @mannionfor50 @nysut @AndyPallotta (@yft860)

Chicago Teachers Union

The “teachers unions say no” to reopening headlines should be “teachers unions are listening to Black and Brown families,” because when given a choice, Black and Brown families consistently say no to further endangering lives in a pandemic that is ravaging their own communities. (@CTULocal1)

Peter Stapleton, PhD

I'm tired. Not the 'I didn't get enough sleep' type, much more the 'everything is unrelenting' type. Doing my best to stay positive and control what I can. I'm thankful for the team I lead & know they're doing the best they can. #onestepatatime #weallneedabreak #pandemicteaching (@P_Stapleton1)

Dr. Jill Biden

We are going to fight for educators and students. That means hiring more counselors and school nurses. That means paying educators what they're worth. That means protecting the right to organize. (@DrBiden)



QUESTIONS FOR...

Stacy Bradley

George Junior Republic TA Co-President

1. Throughout the pandemic, you and your colleagues at Special Act School Districts around the state have gone above and beyond to serve your students. Tell us about that.

We serve about 190 at-risk students who live on campus and come from 53 counties across the state. George Junior has continued to be a safe haven for students because of the perseverance, care and commitment of the educators and staff. While traditional public schools have closed, our educators have continued reporting for duty in person to care for our at-risk students, many of whom are neglected or abused minors and juveniles with a history of delinquency. We've juggled those responsibilities with providing a remote education for about 30 local day-school students.

2. Why didn't you shut down along with the other schools?

Sending residential students home to learn by themselves on a laptop wasn't an option. We moved our entire operation from our classrooms to our students' living areas because it was absolutely essential to ensure there were no gaps in learning. More than that, we knew there couldn't be gaps in the care and love these students need to feel from the adults they rely on. Our members worked quickly to create a safe-learning environment that has helped students navigate the trauma

they have experienced and the anxieties that come with learning during this public health crisis.

3. What kind of support did you provide?

Our staff became their counselors, parents and a support system — and we did the same for each other, leaning on our colleagues for support with both instructional and emotional challenges. On site, it wasn't just subject-area teachers who reported for duty. Our reading specialists, speech therapists, physical education teachers and our culinary arts teacher pitched in to make sure math, science and other subjects were being taught in the residential cottages where students live. It had to be all hands on deck to keep our school going for these children who went six months with nothing more than a weekly Zoom call with their families as support.

4. What about local students?

Off site, our day-school teachers were calling home, contacting social service agencies and families, and in some cases scouring local towns to locate and support students dealing with homelessness. When crisis struck, our members have been nothing short of heroic, creating a safe, supportive space for children who need it most.

5. What has been the union's role?

We've pushed to address health and safety concerns, ensuring proper protocols are in place to keep students and staff safe. We are constantly advocating for more funding for programming and to raise salaries for educators who are paid dramatically less than other public school staff. In a pandemic that has highlighted inequities in education and beyond, we are yet again seeing the disparities that exist for our Special Act Schools. The state is in a precarious financial situation, but we can't allow that to disproportionately affect schools that serve students with the highest needs. These students need adults to do the right thing and provide them with every resource possible to succeed.



PROVIDED

IT'S WHAT WE DO

**Charlotte Johnson,
Port Jefferson Teachers Association**

You might assume that, as a marathon competitor, Charlotte Johnson has a sparkling collection of hard-earned medals hanging on a wall.

But no. She's given them all away.

It's personal. She used to teach with Christine Pendergast, whose husband Chris, also a teacher, was diagnosed with ALS the year Johnson began her career at Comsewogue. Chris Pendergast, an outdoor enthusiast and athlete who founded ALS Ride for Life, raised \$10 million in the more than 27 years he lived with the crippling disease of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He died Oct. 14.

While Johnson swam, ran, cycled and sweated her way through marathons, she put a price on it: she used the events to raise money for Ride for Life.

"I would give him my medal every year," said Johnson. "He would just light up and was so grateful."

Johnson has powered through the Boston Marathon and the Ironman triathlon held annually in Hawaii. Thoughts of ALS pervade her training and her racing, she said, always with Chris Pendergast "in the front and back of my mind."

When Chris Pendergast added a bike trek as an ALS Ride

for Life fundraiser, Johnson helped map out the routes of 25, 50, 75 and 100 miles.

For two decades, as Chris and others with ALS traveled the length of Long Island in their wheelchairs, they would stop at schools. When they stopped at Comsewogue, Johnson's students would perform a song they had chosen specifically for that event. "The

kids really cherished being able to sing for him," Johnson said. "When you can make a connection through singing, that's a very powerful thing."

Money raised by ALS Ride for Life is used to fund research, a treatment clinic, and practical, day-to-day care for families.

To read more about Johnson's work with ALS Ride for Life, visit nysutorg/itswhatwedo.

**On the job and in the community,
NYSUT members make a difference.**



Port Jefferson teacher Charlotte Johnson rides in honor of ALS champ Chris Pendergast.

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Start the New Year off right with NYSUT Member Benefits

It's the same every January — we review how the previous 12 months went and look for ways to improve upon the next dozen. The New Year gives us a chance to wipe the slate clean and build a better future.

Our resolutions can run the gamut: Committing to eat better, starting that book you always wanted to read or write, learn the piano, or building more exercise into your daily routine. All too often, though, we overlook a vital piece of our lives — getting our legal, financial and household needs in order.

Your NYSUT membership gives you a great place to start with the opportunity to participate in the voluntary programs and services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits, including legal and financial planning services; quality insurance plans; student loan and credit counseling; and a host of shopping, travel and personal programs.

Participants in our Legal Service Plan receive access to a national network of attorneys who handle personal legal matters, along with a free Legal Security Package consisting of a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will and Power of Attorney; and two, free, hour-long consultations with a plan attorney. The cost is \$85 per year for in-service members or \$55 per year for retiree members. Optional elder law and business protection riders may also be purchased.

The Financial Counseling Program offers unbiased, objective advice customized to your specific financial situation. The full-service program (\$260 per year) provides up to six hours of toll-free telephone consultations with a certified financial planner or registered investment advisor; a 403(b) advisor option is also available for \$100 per year.

The start of the year is also a great time



to examine if your life insurance needs have changed, and Member Benefits offers a variety of plans that can help you protect your family and income. These life insurance plans provide comprehensive insurance protection even

if you were to change jobs or retire, along with accelerated benefits if the policyholder should be diagnosed as terminally ill.

There is also the convenience of paying for many of these programs through payroll or pension deduction. NYSUT members who use these payment options can save up to 15 percent on annual premiums along with the waiving of fees in many instances.

Our newest program is Member Benefits Discounts and Deals provided by Access Development. It offers NYSUT members savings of up to 50 percent at more than 700,000 locations nationwide on restaurants, groceries and food delivery, clothing and shoes, oil changes and vehicle maintenance, and more.

You and your family can help us make this program even better by recommending your favorite local business, restaurant, coffee shop, etc., join the network. To get started, visit mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com and create an account.

Lastly, if one of your New Year's resolutions is to become a better prepared consumer, Member Benefits also provides a variety of educational opportunities for both NYSUT members and their families, including financial counseling, legal education and home buying workshops/webinars.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 to learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs and services.

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

What to know about taxes and your retirement

As a member or retiree of the New York State Employees' Retirement System (ERS), you may receive taxable income or a taxable distribution from ERS under certain circumstances. If you received a taxable payment in 2020, we will mail you a 1099-R form by Jan. 31, 2021, to use when preparing your federal tax return.

For members

You may be responsible for a taxable distribution from ERS if you take a taxable loan. If you borrow more than a certain amount, the Internal Revenue Service may consider part or all of your loan taxable. If you apply for a loan using Retirement Online, you can see your loan options and any taxable amounts before you borrow. You may also be responsible for a taxable distribution from ERS if you default on a loan. This happens when you do not make payments at least quarterly or do not pay your loan back within five years. For more information about the taxability of ERS loans, visit our Loans page at [osc.state.ny.us/retirement/members/loans-applying-and-repaying](https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retirement/members/loans-applying-and-repaying).

Members who leave public employment before they are vested, and withdraw their ERS membership and contributions, will also receive a 1099-R form.

In every issue, State Comptroller Thomas



P. DiNapoli, administrative head of the 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@nysut.org.

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



For retirees

Most ERS pensions are subject to federal income tax, but not New York State or local income tax. (Note: if you move to another state, that state may tax your pension.) ERS calculates your federal withholding amount based on your W4-P form (Withholding Certificate for Pension or Annuity Payments), which you initially filled out when you retired. You can adjust your federal withholding at any time. For more information and answers to common tax questions, visit our Taxes and Your Pension page at [osc.state.ny.us/retirement/retirees/taxes-and-your-pension](https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retirement/retirees/taxes-and-your-pension).

For members and retirees

To make sure you receive your 1099-R before Dec. 31 of each year, you should sign in to your Retirement Online account, see if we have your correct mailing address on file, and update it if needed. Sign in or register at [web.osc.state.ny.us/retire/sign-in.php](https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/sign-in.php). For help understanding your 1099-R, visit our interactive tutorial at [web.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/tutorial_1099r_form/index.php](https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/tutorial_1099r_form/index.php).

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
trudi.davis@nysut.org

Patti Lennon • 516-496-2035, ext. 324
patti.lennon@nysut.org

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

Working in retirement

Q: I retired on July 1, 2018, and I'm receiving my monthly pension benefit. I'm now doing some per diem substitute work for my previous employer and was approached about filling in for a long-term leave. I wasn't planning to do something like this so soon after retirement, but I'm considering the opportunity. What are the implications for doing this in retirement?

A: If you're under 65 years old, your post-retirement earnings from public employment in New York State are capped at \$35,000 per calendar year; there are no income limits for those over age 65. Other types of employment — for example private, out-of-state or federal government work — are not subject to the earnings cap.

The earnings cap was temporarily suspended for retired health care workers who re-entered the workforce to help out during the pandemic. Any pay earned from March 27, 2020, through Nov. 3, 2020, won't count toward their annual retiree

earnings cap. Contact NYSTRS at 800-348-7298, ext. 6150, with questions.

Q: I've heard that the New York State Teachers' Retirement System has unclaimed funds. How do I find out if I have any? And if I do, how do I claim them?

A: Yes, NYSTRS has a lot of unclaimed funds. To date, it lists more than 1,600 names. Its abandoned account database is even larger, including nearly 13,000 names. Check the site and see if you're owed money. It only takes a moment and could bring an unexpected windfall.

Visit the NYSTRS website at [nystrs.org](https://www.nystrs.org) and select the unclaimed funds tab at the bottom left of the home page. Look closely, it's a tiny tab that's easy to miss.

The tab will direct you to two lists: unclaimed accounts and abandoned accounts. Both are alphabetical by last name and display the listed member's last known teaching location or place of death. The abandoned accounts list is searchable by last name or by last known teaching location.

If you have unclaimed funds, call NYSTRS at 800-348-7298, ext. 6250, to discuss disbursement options and then complete and submit a withdrawal application (REF-7A).



NYSUT TRS consultants

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

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

Sheila Sullivan Buck • 585-454-5550
sheila.buck@nysut.org

Beth Chetney • 315-431-4040
beth.chetney@nysut.org

Ronald Gross • 631-273-8822
ron.gross@nysut.org



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Poster honors Black History Month

NYSUT celebrates Black History Month this February with a new poster honoring Stacey Abrams, an American politician, lawyer, voting rights activist and author who served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 2007 to 2017. She was the body's minority leader from 2011 until the end of her term.

As the 2018 Democratic nominee in the Georgia gubernatorial race, Abrams was the first female, Black major-party nominee for governor in the United States. After losing to

Republican Brian Kemp in an election

marked by accusations of voter suppression, in 2018 Abrams founded Fair Fight Action, an organization committed to ensuring that all votes are counted. The group has helped register an estimated 800,000 new voters and fought "exact match" rules used to disqualify ballots for typos and minor errors.

It's an honor

Linda Doerr, Lakeland Federation of Teachers retiree, and **Susan Petroccione**, Haldane Faculty Association retiree, were inducted into the Westchester County Senior Hall of Fame. Since her retirement, Doerr has served on the Westchester/Putnam Retirees Executive Board as vice president of community outreach. She was also recognized for her work as an AFT and NYSUT delegate and as a volunteer advocate with the union's Committee of 100. Petroccione, a founding member and president of the non-profit Somers Library Foundation, was recognized for her volunteer service with many different organizations and her work with local and international relief efforts.

Global Studies teachers **Phil Schoff** and **Phil Horender**, Canajoharie United School Employees Teachers Association, launched "The Missing Chapter: History's Forgotten Stories."

The podcast highlights obscure, lesser known events in history. To listen, visit **podcasts.**

apple.com/us/podcast/the-missing-chapter-historys-forgotten-stories/id1534509472.

Penny Prince, Professional Staff Congress/CUNY Lehman College, has produced a new musical online. "Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet" debuted Sept. 22 on the Lehman MMTD YouTube page. **youtu.be/lbwgYh2b_KA.**

In print

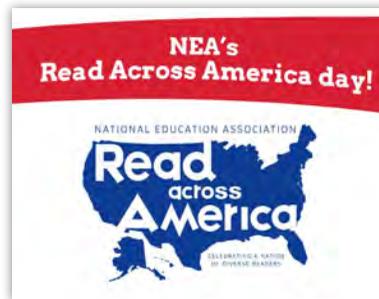
Elizabeth Battaglia, Rondout Valley FT retiree, has published her first children's book. *Astrid-20* helps children understand the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In February 2019, Abrams became the first Black woman to deliver a response to a presidential State of the Union address. In 2020, Abrams' work was crucial in increasing the number of registered voters and getting a record number of voters to the Georgia polls.

NYSUT is proud of its history of working with the Black community to advance the civil rights movement and to promote quality education and health care for all New Yorkers.

For more on the important contributions of Black Americans to the labor movement, or to download a printable copy of the poster, visit **nysut.org/publications**. Limited quantities are free for NYSUT members and leaders.

Read Across America



While Read Across America Day is celebrated March 2, the reading program sponsored by the National Education Association is celebrated all year long! Visit **readacrossamerica.org** for a plethora of resources, including tips for readers, book list recommendations that showcase diverse authors and characters, and info on securing free books. The site also includes a monthly calendar featuring a different theme each month. Upcoming themes include Explore families and history (January); Practice empathy (February) and Cultivate compassion (March).



Judith Harding, Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers retiree, published *Soaring for Academic*

Success: 50 Simple Ways Families Can Help Their Young Children Succeed in School.

Kenneth Huff, Williamsville TA, has written *Engaging Students in Science Investigation Using GRC: Science Instruction Consistent with the NRC Framework and NGSS*. The book is available at **teachingsciencelife.com/store/p10/EngagewithGRC.html.**

Wilbur (Bill) Johnson, United Federation of Teachers retiree, published *Right Time, Right Places: One Teacher's School Reform Journey*. The memoir is available from the publisher, Adelaide Books, **adelaidebooks.org.**

Helen Levin, a UFT retiree, has written

Small Gifts: A Memoir of an Artist in the Classroom. An art and literacy teacher, Levin describes in the book how she implemented original drawing techniques, then applies them for an adult literacy pilot program.

Michael Pellettieri, UFT retiree, published *The Boardwalkers*, a murder-mystery set in the '80s. The book "features love, suspense and exposes the seedy underbelly of Atlantic City." The book is available at Barnes and Noble.

Nancy Robison, Nassau BOCES Central Council of Teachers retiree, has published a children's series, *Stubby: A Cat's Story*. The books follow the adventures of Stubby the cat. Robison donates all proceeds from the book sales to animal charities.

Madlyn Epstein Steinhart, UFT retiree, has written *Put Your Boots On and Dance in the Rain*. The poetry book is available via The Three Tomatoes Publishing.

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