Communities give schools and educators top marks for pandemic response
It's golden! NYSUT celebrates 50 years

NYSUT Affiliated with AFT = NEA = AFL-CIO

NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS
800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110
518-213-6000 or 800-342-9810

OFFICERS:
President: Andy Pallotta
Second Vice President: Jolene T. DiBrango
Secretary-Treasurer: J. Philippe Abraham

ELECTION DISTRICT DIRECTORS:
Peter Stuhlmiller, Michelle Licht, Joseph J. Najuch, Kevin Moie, Adam Urbanski, Andrew Jordan, John Kuryla, David Chizoniste, Jeanette Stapley, Laura Franz, Joseph Harringshaw, Juliet Benaquisto, Melissa Servant, Sparrow Robin, Sean Kennedy, Jeffrey Yorkers, Tomia Smith, Frederic Stark, Gregory Perles, John Mansfield, Kevin Coyne, Nancy Sanders, Laura Spencer, Karen Blackwell Afford, Cari Cambria, Mary Vaccaro, Amy Arundell, Marylou Ginesi, Mary Akinson, Anthony Harmon, Michael Mulgrew, Elizabeth Perez, Cassie Prugh, Richard Mantell, Lefroy Barr, Felicia Wharton (City & Private Higher Ed), Penelope Lewis (City & Private Higher Ed), Roberta Elins (Community Colleges), Jamie Dangler (State Higher Ed, UUP), Rowena Blackman-Stroud (State Higher Ed, UUP), Thomas Tucker (State Higher Ed, UUP), Philip Rumore, Adam Pasecki, Dora Leland, Loretta Dorion (Retiree), Thomas Murphy (Retiree)

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS:
Cheryl Hughes, Joseph Cantafio, Andrew Bogey, Brian Ebertz, Don Carliso, Maria Pacheco, Matthew Haynes, Samantha Rosado-Ciries, Cordelia Anthony, Ronald Verderber, Debra Penny, Michael Sill, Analia Gerard, Thomas Brown, Janelle Hinds, Sterling Roberson, Barbara Bowen, Frederick Kwali, Florence McGuire, Sheky Y. Abrams (SRPs), Sandra Carpenter-Shelton (SRPs), Karen Lee Arthmann (SRPs), Deborah Paulin (SRPs), Angie Rivera (SRPs), Anne Goldman (Health Care), Stephen Rechner (Private Sector Higher Ed), Andrew Sako (Community Colleges), Pamela Malone (Higher Education) and Michael Fabiancic (Higher Education)

EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER:
Melinda Person, Executive Director/NYSUT Political Director

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS:
Antonia Cortese (Emerita), Thomas Y. Hobart Jr. (President Emeritus), Alan B. Lubin (Executive Vice President Emeritus)

AFT VICE PRESIDENTS:
J. Philippe Abraham, Shelly Y. Abrams, Barbara Bowen, Don Carliso, Evelyn DeJesus, Jolene T. DiBrango, Ron Gross, Anthony M. Harmon, Frederick Kwali, Michael Mulgrew, Andy Pallotta, Adam Urbanski

NEA DIRECTORS:
Serena Katch, Thomas McMahon
Alternate Directors: Sue Raichilson, Dora Leland
Executive Committee members are undetermed.

School Meals play a pivotal role in the learning process.

Hunger can be an overwhelming distraction for students, which is why school nutrition is essential to learning readiness. You can ensure that ALL students are fueled to learn by promoting access to alternate school meal models – particularly Breakfast After the Bell.

To learn more, contact us at: schools@milk4u.org

©2022 ADANE
NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said recently that last year’s commitment to a three-year phase in of the full Foundation Aid formula, along with the governor’s promise to honor that commitment, is “a tremendous step forward for education in New York.” However, he told lawmakers, below, at a virtual joint hearing on the elementary and secondary education budget, it will take more than that to meet the needs of students, educators and their communities in the post-COVID–19 future.

Gov. Hochul introduced her 2022–23 executive budget proposal in January, kicking off the annual weeks of debate in the Legislature — not in the statehouse, due to COVID–19 restrictions — to negotiate a final fiscal plan for the state by April 1, the start of the fiscal year.

Pallotta, NYSUT legislative staff and volunteer political activists have shared the union’s groundbreaking Future Forward Taskforce Report (futureforwardny.org) widely as a blueprint for moving education forward. The report represents ground-level guidance by NYSUT members from every region of the state.

Pallotta said the union was pleased to see many of the items recommended in the FF report were included in the executive budget proposal. But the union’s testimony and subsequent lobbying efforts in Zoom meetings, written memos, phone calls — and even a virtual legislative reception — have focused on areas where we need to ensure that programs or services meet the needs of students and help them move forward from the past two years.

“The issues around schools being the centers of communities and having the wrap-around services that students and their families require — such as child nutrition, mental health and childcare, which we have been discussing for years — have been thrust into the forefront throughout this pandemic,” Pallotta said.

With the state’s commitment to fully fund school aid and federal pandemic relief funding in hand, “We have a unique opportunity to make lasting change to address the complex needs of our students,” he said.

NYSUT is calling for dedicated funding to expand the number of community schools; new laws to set minimum staffing levels and ensure there’s a social worker, school psychologist, counselor and nurse in every school; support for prospective teachers, particularly educators of color, and restoring funding to teacher centers.

The union also seeks repeal of the oppressive receivership law and punitive consequences of flawed standardized tests.

“Returning to ‘normal’ isn’t good enough for our students,” Pallotta said. “Now is the time to redefine public education as a system that truly supports every child and ensures they have the tools to create a brighter future for our nation and our state. Because when students thrive, we all thrive.”
The negotiations over state aid to higher education started off this year on a hopeful note as the executive budget proposal would invest more in SUNY, CUNY and the community colleges than anyone has seen in years.

Even so, leaders of NYSUT higher education affiliates are telling lawmakers that, due to a decade of fiscal neglect prior to Gov. Hochul’s administration, they need to increase funding to colleges and universities in the 2022–23 state budget.

“We are thankful for many of the initiatives contained in this year’s executive budget proposal, but more is needed to reverse the impact caused by years of underfunding,” said Andy Sako, president of the Faculty Federation of Erie Community College. “We will once again be looking to our friends in the Legislature … as we struggle to emerge from the pandemic.”

“Campuses continue to face difficult decisions concerning the potential elimination of programs and declining student services due to inadequate resources,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

“Our SUNY and CUNY systems have long provided a pathway to the middle class for so many New Yorkers,” he said, “and they must have access to the funding necessary to offer the high-quality programs and services students rely on to prepare for their careers.”

United University Professions, representing academic and professional faculty at SUNY campuses, and the Professional Staff Congress, representing faculty and professional staff at CUNY, each seek more than $250 million in additional funding for their campuses.

“We thank the governor for addressing longstanding issues like closing the TAP Gap and investing in the Excelsior Scholarship,” said UUP President Frederick E. Kowal, but more is needed for campuses and to support the SUNY teaching hospitals.

PSC seeks resources to fund year one of the New Deal for CUNY legislation, which could restore CUNY as a tuition-free institution for undergraduates.

PSC President James Davis called on the governor and lawmakers “to reaffirm the values of equity, opportunity and access to quality higher education.”

You can find NYSUT’s budget testimony on higher education at nysut.org/news.
This is no time to cut health care resources

By Ned Hoskin
ned.hoskin@nysut.org

NYSUT and its Health Care Professionals Council were pleased to see Gov. Hochul’s commitment to grow the state’s health care workforce by 20 percent over the next five years. The union is urging lawmakers to support the objective.

“It is a very ambitious goal,” said NYSUT Second Vice President Ron Gross, who leads the union’s health care contingent, “one that requires dedication and outreach to those health care professionals and facilities for whom this goal is designed.

“We must do everything possible to incentivize existing nurses to remain in the profession while also taking steps to attract the next generation of caregivers.”

The union also seeks to restore the mission funding, or subsidy, for the three SUNY hospitals. Properly funding these vital teaching institutions that were front and center in the war against COVID–19 will help ensure New York is ready for the next health crisis. It should be restored to the 2017–18 level of $88 million.

NYSUT supports the governor’s proposal to increase funding under the Medicaid Global Cap, as well as various health care reforms in the executive budget proposal. But the group vowed to condemn any cuts that would adversely affect the health care workforce or facilities.

You can find NYSUT’s legislative budget testimony on health and Medicaid at nysut.org/news.

GOTV! to win school board elections, pass budgets May 17

Our public schools belong to all of us. They belong to the students, the hard-working families who support them, and the educators and staff who ensure that children from every background have the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

New Yorkers need strong public schools to unite us and be the center of our communities. Their votes voice those values in the annual ritual of district budget approval.

Fortunately, a recent poll from the National School Boards Association shows that parents and educators are united in this cause. It said 59 percent of voters think funding for public schools should be increased, and 86 percent of those voters would support an increase in funding even if it meant they would pay more in taxes.

It is imperative that union members and communities stand up, speak out and VOTE MAY 17 to show that they support the best interests of our students.

Last spring, the distortion and disinformation that pollutes the political landscape flowed into school board elections and budget votes in a dangerous new way. In districts from many corners of the state, it overturned the fragile balance of community interest and common sense that levels debates over priorities and public education.

NYSUT members need to get involved with their local unions to endorse and elect school board members who support public education, teachers and school staff.

The statewide school budget votes and board elections — for schools not in the Big 5 — are May 17, but the budget preparation process has already begun.

Contact your union representative to find out how you can help. NYSUT even has a pipeline project that can help candidates run for board seats — and win!
Members of the Brookhaven Memorial Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals union have been overworked and understaffed for two years fighting COVID-19. That fight continues, but the dedicated unionists do have one victory to celebrate. Members overwhelmingly ratified a three-year contract that will boost pay and address staffing problems.

The agreement includes 3 percent salary raises each year and a special recognition bonus for members who have remained working at the hospital throughout the pandemic. Members overwhelmingly ratified a three-year contract that will boost pay and address staffing problems.

The contract agreement for professional staff at Long Island Community Hospital — which changed its name from Brookhaven Memorial four years ago — includes monetary increases in longevity, call pay and tuition reimbursement. It provides ongoing opportunities for the union to address staffing issues and a commitment to comply with the New York state Safe Staffing Law, enacted last June after a years-long struggle.

Brookhaven Memorial FNHP President Cynthia Lacey said she has received texts from members who are working extended shifts, and others who raised concerns over the number of patients they are responsible for.

“Nurses who are out due to COVID has been a big factor,” Lacey said, adding that because of the shortage caused by symptomatic nurses out of work, those who test positive but have no symptoms are still required to go to work.

Respiratory therapists and lab workers are also working mandatory overtime, and nurse practitioners and physician assistants “have been pushed to the limit,” Lacey said.

NYSUT labor relations specialist Mike Krauthamer said union leaders are constantly advocating with hospital administration over staffing issues and health and safety protocol.

“Recently, many members have themselves tested positive resulting in challenging staffing issues as well as obviously being concerned over the health of their union colleagues,” he said. “It is hard to describe the impact that the pandemic has had on these members. Their lives have been turned upside down.”

The hospital has suffered significant staffing issues for years, even prior to COVID-19, but it has been greatly magnified during the pandemic. The lack of staff has resulted in members consistently working extra shifts, often in areas of the hospital they are not typically assigned, Krauthamer said. Members also have to deal with mandated overtime during periods that New York state is under a state of emergency.

The 538-member unit predominately comprises nurses working in all capacities, but also includes respiratory therapists, homecare and hospice workers, social workers, pharmacy workers, nurse practitioners, lab technologists, care managers and others.

The parties also agreed to participate in labor/management training sessions conducted by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.
Contract gains much more than money

By Sylvia Saunders
sylvia.saunders@nysut.org

A long-awaited contract settlement in Greece gains much more than dollars and cents; it improves childcare leave for adoptive parents, adds student learning time without increasing the workday and gives teachers more control over their own professional learning.

Greece, the largest suburban district in greater Rochester, is one of many locals around the state winning groundbreaking contract agreements — thanks to the power of collective bargaining and substantial state and federal pandemic relief funding.

“We’re very proud of our contract and hope it will help set the pace for other districts,” said Greece Teachers Association President Brian Ebertz, a member of NYSUT’s Board. “That’s what unionism is all about.”

Ebertz noted that with significant staff shortages and retention issues, districts know they need to be competitive and should be more open to wide-ranging contract talks on measures that will improve teaching and learning conditions.

After surveying members on contract priorities, Ebertz said the negotiating team worked hard to restructure the step schedule to accelerate raises, improve starting salaries and remove the salary cap for the most experienced teachers. By the third year of the four-year contract, individuals who started their careers at $35,000 will have increased to $47,638. “The new salary schedule will definitely help us with recruitment and retention,” Ebertz said.

Another priority was maintaining the district’s 90/10 health insurance cost-sharing. “There aren’t many districts still contributing 90 percent. We were able to preserve that until the last year of the contract,” he said.

The agreement also overhauls the district’s longtime professional development system.

Rather than a top-down, points-based system, members will now have a greater deal more control and choice for their required professional learning. “We researched other models and our goal was to have a menu of appropriate offerings based on goals and interests,” Ebertz said. “It’s really a revolutionary change, where P.D. is more tailored, flexible and on-demand.”

The contract will also allow staff to provide more of the professional learning for colleagues and get compensated at a higher rate.

In response to changing times and member requests, the union negotiated a 13-day expansion of paid leave for adoptive parents. Non-birthing parents will be eligible for an additional three days. Until now, adoptive and same-sex parents had to patch together days just to spend some time with their new child. “It’s a matter of fairness,” Ebertz said.

To expand quality sports programs, the contract adds three dozen coaching positions and raises stipends. The district has committed to similarly increase extracurricular compensation once an internal audit is completed.

“Sports and extracurriculars are important to our community and our kids,” Ebertz said.

Other important provisions provide scheduled time for speech language pathologists to consult with classroom teachers, complete student testing, develop IEPs and provide Medicaid documentation. In an effort to improve retention of special education staff, those teaching students with severe needs will receive stipends. “Again, this is a first step,” Ebertz said.

Negotiations haven’t always been so favorable for the 1,100-member Greece TA. In the last two decades, negotiations have been so protracted that the two sides have reached only three contract agreements since 2001. With that in mind, the new pact includes a guaranteed 1.5 percent salary increase that kicks in if the current contract expires.

“We’re hopeful this agreement sets the stage for future negotiations, with only minor tweaks next time,” Ebertz said. The contract was overwhelmingly approved by 87 percent of members.

---

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

ELECTION DISTRICT 52

A vacancy exists on the NYSUT Board of Directors for Election District 52. The vacancy was created by the passing of Director Rosemary Catanzariti.

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 for the 2022 Representative Assembly representing the members of ED 52 will be eligible to vote in this Special Election.

The delegates and alternates of ED 52 are hereby notified that this vacancy will be filled by a Special Election Meeting to be held as follows:

**DATE:** April 2, 2022

**TIME:** 8:30 a.m.

**PLACE:** Albany Capital Center
55 Eagle St., Albany, NY 12207

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) members from ED 52.

The completed and signed Nominating Petition must then be received by the NYSUT Elections Committee by the close of business (5 p.m.) on March 22, 2022. Any member in good standing from within ED 52 may be a candidate. 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 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 2, 2022, at the above location. The Special Election Meeting will remain in session until a successor director is elected. The number of votes to which a Retiree Council is entitled will be evenly distributed among that local’s delegates present and voting.

The candidate elected will serve as successor Election District Director immediately upon being elected at the April 2, 2022, Special Election Meeting 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 2022 NYSUT RA from ED 52 are requested to be present for this election meeting.
Empowerment clubs, new ELT course mark Women’s History Month

By Kara Smith
kara.smith@nysut.org

Lena Schmalacker might be 12 years old, but if she had her way, she’d already be a NYSUT Women’s Committee member. “She wanted to attend the November meeting with me, but I said ‘no, it’s for grown ups,’” said mom Rahana Schmalacker, Central Islip Teachers Association, a steering committee member. “She sees me doing this work and wants to get kids her age involved.”

Schmalacker kept Lena in the loop throughout the meeting, particularly during a presentation about student empowerment clubs by Andrea McCue, Haldane Faculty Association; Rebekah Stoll, Valley Central TA; and Tenika Wilcox, Troy TA. “While I was listening to their presentation, I texted her about starting an empowerment club in our town,” said Schmalacker. Empowerment groups offer students space to explore issues like fairness, safety, equity, access and representation.

Thanks to the mother-daughter team, “Learn and Lead” will host its first meeting at the Patchogue-Medford Carnegie Library for Young Adults in March, which is Women’s History Month. They plan to host monthly meetings for interested community students in grades 6 – 12. The Schmalackers envision club meetings that teach about history-making women, engage in community service projects and host community guest speakers like elected officials, female trade professionals, business leaders and other community members willing to serve as mentors.

Empowering students like Lena is one of the goals of the NYSUT Women’s Committee, explained committee co-chairs Aisha Cook, New Rochelle FUSE, and Leslie Rose, Hewlett Woodmere FA. “We want girls to grow into confident and powerful women, who are equal to the men around them … nothing can stop us if we do this work together,” said Cook.

A central committee focus is building relationships and empowering union women through local-level women’s committees. “It’s important to have a network in place when issues arise, so we know that we’re never alone,” said Rose.

Jolene DiBrango, NYSUT executive vice president, whose office oversees the NYSUT Women’s Committee, encouraged attendees to use their collective strength to stand together in their communities, build coalitions and make their voices heard.

“The loss of jobs, wages and childcare, due to the pandemic, has set women back financially for decades, and by association women’s equity and equality,” she said, noting that women must assume positions of prominence equal to men to “change the power paradigm” and make real change.

Creating more gender inclusive classrooms is key, said DiBrango, who discussed “Examining Curriculum Through an Equity Lens: Focus on Gender,” a new, two-hour NYSUT Education & Learning Trust seminar slated to launch March 29. The course will explore gender equity in the classroom and provide strategies for integrating diversity, equity and inclusion concepts into lessons.

DiBrango noted that educators’ actions, words and behaviors can have a big impact on student success. “Starting an empowerment club, or enrolling in the new seminar are both great ways to celebrate Women’s History Month this March,” she said.

For seminar information, visit elt.nysut.org. To learn more about the NYSUT Women’s Committee, and get resources to celebrate Women’s History Month including the 2022 Women’s History Month poster, visit nysut.org/women.

The site includes information on starting a women’s empowerment club at your school or in your community.
The 2022 NYSUT Representative Assembly, April 1–2 in Albany, will mark the 50th anniversary of the formation of New York State United Teachers. The statewide union was formed March 30, 1972, with the merger of two rival statewide teacher unions — the New York State Teachers Association and United Teachers of New York.

Initially named the New York Congress of Teachers, delegates at the union’s first RA, held in Montreal in 1973, adopted NYSUT as the union’s official name.

Over the past half century, our membership and visibility have steadily soared. During this time, NYSUT members have advocated tirelessly to make sure that the work we do is properly valued, appreciated and protected.

“Now, we focus every day on growing, guarding and solidifying this movement for the benefit of our professions, our people and our communities,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

After the pandemic forced NYSUT to conduct virtual RAs the past two years, restoring the annual convention to an in-person event is an important priority for 2022, with appropriate precautions in place.

The RA is NYSUT’s highest policymaking body. Convention delegates, elected by their local unions, will debate nearly 30 resolutions to set the union’s course on legislation, health care, pre-K through post-grad education, organizing and retirement. They will also consider amendments to the NYSUT Constitution and Bylaws.

View the full document at nysut.org/about/constitution-and-bylaws.

The RA will pay tribute to the winners of the union’s awards and recognitions for members’ work on the job and their service to the community.

For more information on the RA and the Local and Retiree Council Presidents Conference, visit nysut.org/ra.

PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENT

SUBMITTED BY THE NYSUT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTE: Brackets [ ] indicate deletions. Underscores ____ indicate additions. Applicable Bylaws Section numbers: As Listed Below.

Line #

B. Membership (Section 1)
86 which [he/she is] they are eligible.

C. Representative Assembly (Section 3[a])
242 or represented on [her/his] their own behalf

E. Referenda (Sections 3[h], 4, 7)
262 weeks of its receipt by [him/her] them.
283 President, or [her/his] their representative,
297 the count. [He/she] The President shall also publish the

J. Special Rules of Order for Representative Assembly (Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 5[c])
334 be prepared by the President or [her/his] their
336 Each delegate voting shall enter on [her/his] their
337 ballot how [she/he is] they are voting and sign the
341 from the delegates of [her/his] their local or retiree
349 by the Chair of the Convention or [her/his] their
358 [her/his] their local or retiree council, the roll
361 shall rise as [her/his] their name is called, and
362 announce [her/his] their vote.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SUBMITTED BY THE NYSUT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTE: Brackets [ ] indicate deletions. Underscores ____ indicate additions. Applicable Constitution Article and Section numbers: As Listed Below.

Line #

Article VII — Officers (Sections 3[a], 3[h], 3[k], 4)
226 NYSUT. It shall be [her/his] their duty to
253 who will serve at [her/his] their pleasure,
254 manage [her/his] their office, speak for and
255 represent [her/him] them, and who, if at time of
276 fulfill such other duties as [her/his] their office
284 President in [her/his] their absence and to perform

Article VIII — Representative Assembly (Section 1[c])
327 leaves the Assembly, [her/his] their place in

Article IX — Board of Directors (Sections 1[f-i], 1[f-ii])
564 equivalent membership for [her/his] their
570 [his/her] their election district.
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
Choose from these online master’s degree and advanced certificate options:
• Early Childhood and Special Education
• Educational Leadership (SBL, SDL, SDBL)
• Special Education (B-Grade 2, Grades 1-6 or 7-12)
• Applied Behavior Analysis (Advanced Certificate Only)

How can YOU benefit from The Power of Niagara?
• Convenient and flexible course options fit your schedule
• Fall/spring/summer start options
• Less expensive than most other college programs
• Engaging and collaborative learning community
• Niagara University’s College of Education is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

Request Information Today!
1.800.462.2111
grad-ed@niagara.edu
www.niagara.edu/advance

Advance Your Career - from ANYWHERE!
Earn a Master’s Degree in Instructional Technology and Do More in Your Career
gst.touro.edu

1st Master’s Degree | 1st salary differential or
2nd Master’s Degree | 2nd salary differential (30 above)
Affordable tuition ($595/credit) • Certification exam prep • No GRE requirement
For information contact Marekh Chikadze: 212.463.0400 ext.55248 or 646.648.2258 • marekh.chikadze@touro.edu

Farmers Insurance Choice*

WE’RE TALKING HUNDREDS IN SAVINGS

NYSUT Members: When it comes to auto and home insurance, there are a lot of options out there. With Farmers Insurance Choice, you get personalized auto and home insurance quotes from highly-rated carriers all in one place – in just minutes.

Get multiple quotes from highly-rated national carriers
Choose coverage best suited to your needs
Customers who chose Farmers GroupSelectSM saved an average of $562* on auto insurance

CALL TOLL-FREE: 1-866-NYSUT-22 (1-866-697-8822) and provide your discount code 005 or visit farmersinsurancechoice.com/nysut to learn more.

*Based on the average nationwide annual savings in 2020 reported by new customers who called the Farmers GroupSelectSM employee and affinity member call center, switched their auto insurance to a Farmers branded insurance policy issued through a Farmers GroupSelectSM employer or affinity member program, and realized savings. Potential savings vary by customer and may vary by state and product.

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

Farmers Insurance Choice is used by Farmers General Insurance Agency, Inc. (the “Agency”) and other independent agencies and captive agents to provide consumers a broad choice of insurance providers. Coverage may be underwritten by carriers unaffiliated with Farmers GroupSelectSM through the Agency: CA License #0D25399. The Agency’s name is approved in its domiciliary state; approval pending in non-domiciliary states.

Advertisement produced on behalf of the following specific insurers and seeking to obtain business for insurance underwritten by Farmers Property and Casualty Insurance (a MA & MN licensee) and certain of its affiliates: Economy Fire & Casualty Company, Economy Premier Assurance Company, Economy Preferred Insurance Company, Farmers Casualty Insurance Company (a MN licensee), Farmers Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Company (CA Certificate of Authority: 6730; Warwick, RI), Farmers Group Property and Casualty Insurance Company (CA COA: 6399; Warwick, RI), or Farmers Lloyd’s Insurance Company of Texas, all with administrative home offices at 700 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI 02886. Company names approved in domiciliary states; approval pending non-domiciliary states. Coverage, rates, discounts, and policy features vary by state and product and are available in most states to those who qualify. Policies have exclusions, limitations, and terms under which the policy may be continued in force or discontinued. For costs and complete details of coverage, contact your local representative or the company.

Farmers GroupSelect 700 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI 02886 © 2021 Farmers Insurance
NYSUT salutes Black History Month

By Kara Smith
kara.smith@nysut.org

NYSUT’s Black History Month celebration kicked off in February with a rousing drum circle by The Washington Park Rumberos and performances of the “Star Spangled Banner,” sung by Savannah Gordon, and the Black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” performed by United Federation of Teachers member Sonja Hill. The virtual event highlighted the unique struggles underrepresented groups face with regard to mental health and wellness in our nation.

“The health and wellness of individuals within the Black community is a conversation that’s long overdue,” said J. Philippe Abraham, NYSUT secretary-treasurer, in welcoming remarks. Abraham, who hosted the event, noted that the issue is especially timely since communities of color are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Lisa Good, founder and director of Urban Grief, discussed the lasting impact of trauma on the overall health and well-being of Black citizens — both from the pandemic and from historic hardships such as unfair policing, Jim Crow laws and slavery. Experiences like these, coming without break, can overwhelm an individual’s normal ability to cope, she explained.

“We have to comfort one another and collaborate with each other as we work toward a healthier community,” said Good. “We must be bold and lift up conversations about health equity and learn how to better navigate our health systems.”

Leven “Chuck” Wilson, assistant director of health issues for the American Federation of Teachers, encouraged participants to foster well-being within themselves, and others in their community, by promoting good communication. “Having courageous conversations is key to achieving wellness,” he said. “A lifetime of disparity and unfair treatment has created an inability to talk, ask for help or seek support. Our wellness is our responsibility.”

Members of the Federation of Nurses/UFT and NYSUT’s Health Care Professionals Council were recognized for their dedicated work throughout the pandemic. Anne Goldman, FON/UFT special representative, accepted on behalf of members, noting that “we’re proud of the work we do, and blessed to be part of a powerful union.”

Accepting on behalf of NYSUT’s HCPC, Karen Griffin, BOCES United Professionals, thanked nurses and health aides “for your compassion and resilience. Be encouraged; your ongoing work has not gone unnoticed.”

Other event highlights included performances by HerTemple Monologues, singer Tamara Horn and poet LeDerick Horne. Rev. Marc E. Thompson, pastor of the New Day Christian Empowerment Center in Schenectady, delivered an opening invocation and closing benediction.

To learn more about NYSUT’s Many Threads One Fabric initiative exploring racial justice, diversity and equity issues, visit nysut.org/manythreads.

NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham traveled to Tri-Valley Secondary School in Sullivan County in late January to meet with Matt Haynes’ Civics and Social Justice students and discuss the work of the NYSUT Social Justice Committee. Haynes, a NYSUT Board member and vice president of the Tri-Valley Teachers Association, presented Abraham with a “Partners in Education” certificate in recognition of his advocacy on behalf of Tri-Valley members and NYSUT members statewide.
51 NY teachers earn profession’s highest credential

By Sylvia Saunders
sylvi.saunders@nysut.org

Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher is always a big honor. But earning the profession’s highest credential during a pandemic? That’s even more impressive.

NYSUT congratulated the 51 teachers from across the state who earned National Board Certification in December 2021. They will be honored April 5 in an online event co-hosted by NYSUT and the New York State Education Department.

“Achieving National Board Certification in the midst of a pandemic is a testament to the dedication these teachers have to their students and their profession,” NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said. “It’s a tremendous accomplishment.”

New York is now home to 2,224 National Board Certified Teachers, with nearly 700 more educators still in the process, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Candidates typically spend 200-400 hours completing the extensive application including a portfolio, student work samples, videos and an analysis of their teaching and student learning.

“We began our journey three years ago before the pandemic hit,” said Lisa Cannata, a speech pathologist who worked with a cohort of Half Hollow Hills teachers led by Elissa Reichstein. “If you told me I’d be doing this while teaching my kids (with severe disabilities) on Zoom and documenting their growth in a video, I never would have believed you!”

Cannata said working with a group was incredibly helpful, with colleagues reading each other’s papers, offering technology tips and much more. “We met Saturdays and during shared free periods,” Cannata said. “Sometimes it’s moral support, sometimes it’s specific to our discipline. Other times, it is just reviewing the teaching standards and discussing with our colleagues, how their teaching works within this framework.”

Cannata and three other teachers who were the first in the cohort to achieve will continue working with colleagues who are still working on their applications. “While doing this during a pandemic was certainly challenging, it really helped me grow collaboratively, technologically and creatively,” Cannata said. “Now I want to give back and help others on their journey.”

Cannata said she is fortunate that her district is one of hundreds in the state with contracts offering a salary step or stipend for NBCTs. She also is grateful for the state’s Albert Shanker Grant, a union-backed initiative that covers the costs for National Board Certification.

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

Achieving National Board Certification can also be used to satisfy the state’s Continguing Teacher and Leader Education requirements, DiBrango noted. Through NYSUT’s ELT and Empire State College, candidates can earn three graduate credits for each completed component for a total of 12 graduate credits. Many school districts provide compensation for graduate credits.

Want to know more? Teachers interested in pursuing National Board Certification can find resources online, including a support program, tips and a list of districts that offer incentives. Visit the national board page at nysut.org/nbpts or nbpts.org.
Congratulations!

NYS Class of 2021 National Board Certified Teachers

CHITTENANGO TA
Elizabeth Carpenter
Science/AYA

CORNWALL CENTRAL TA
Olga Chernyak
World Languages/EAYA

GRAND ISLAND TA
Mary Howard
Generalist/MC

HALF HOLLOW HILLS TA
Camellia Amadio
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Lisa Cannata
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Caroline Greene
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Lauren Ruiz
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

HASTINGS TA
Steven Lopez
World Languages/EAYA

HUDSON FALLS TA
Sharon Farrel
English Language Arts/AYA

JAMESVILLE-DEWITT FA
David Bunyan
Social Studies-History/AYA
Andrew Cottet
Social Studies-History/AYA

LAFAYETTE TA
David Amidon
Science/EA

LONG BEACH CLASSROOM TA
Christine Graham
Social Studies-History/AYA

PLAINEDGE FT
Maura Czachor
Mathematics/EA

SCHENECTADY FT
Rebecca Benjamin
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC
Donya Clute
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC
Jessica Kohout
Science/AYA
Ellen Lin
Science/AYA
Julie Neugebauer
Mathematics/EA

SEWANHAKA FT
Joan Molloy-Castles
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Lorin Wirth-Eckl
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

SMITHTOWN TA
Jennifer Keller
Social Studies-History/AYA

SPRINGS TA
Ryan Scala
Generalist/MC

STILLWATER TA
Madison Rammes
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC

SYOSSET TA
Manoj Thadhani
Social Studies-History/AYA

SYRACUSE TA
Melicia Edwards
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC

UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
Michelle Asaro
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Jihyun Bahng
Mathematics/AYA
Yvonne Banks
Generalist/EC
Katelyn Chininis
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC
Ivelisse Cortes
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Kiersten Franz
Mathematics/AYA
Diana Guerrin
Generalist/EC
Yesenia Moreno
English as a New Language/EMC
Mary Petit
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC
Vincent Pham
English as a New Language/AYA
Sarah Przedsborski
Generalist/EC
Cassandra Regan
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Cynthia Serrano
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Julia Shube
Mathematics/AYA
Jessica VanScoy
Social Studies-History/AYA
Susan Wierzbowski
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA

UNITED LIVERPOOL FA
Valerie Manzo
Generalist/EC

WAPPINGERS CT
Laura Ineson
Science/EA

WEST GENESEE DISTRICT TA
Kelli Barbuto
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC

YONKERS FT
Christine Heidelberger
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/EMC

UNAFFILIATED:
Molly Goodell
Science/EA
Grace Hwang
Generalist/EC
Chris Marshall
Exceptional Needs Specialist/ECYA
Kasey Rabideau
Social Studies-History/EA
Stephanie Schaefer
Mathematics/AYA

Key:
AYA: Adolescence and Young Adulthood
EA: Early Adolescence
EAYA: Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood
EC: Early Childhood
ECYA: Early Childhood through Young Adulthood
EMC: Early and Middle Childhood
MC: Middle Childhood
We’ve all heard the noise.

A small but vocal minority of citizens, local officials, even board members and some parents blame educators — who are on the front lines of the pandemic, striving to keep students, their families and communities safe — for the disruption of the school year.

In Saratoga Springs, a teacher was attacked viciously on social media for trying to help a distraught youngster who showed up at school without a mask. The same week, another educator near Albany was directly threatened by a parent whose high-schooler was sent home for refusing to wear a mask.

Reports of similar confrontations have been reported all over the state. These are the latest examples of NYSUT members enduring unfair challenges to their professionalism and competence while doing all they can to help kids recover and thrive.

“Our union stands with them,” said Andy Pallotta, NYSUT president. “While there are small, vocal elements who unfairly blame teachers, the larger community has shown its understanding and appreciation.”

While educators feel the heat in the crucible of understaffed buildings, the majority of parents say neighborhood public schools are crucial to help their children get through this ordeal.

According to a recent survey by the American Federation of Teachers, a supermajority of parents give
their schools and teachers top marks for their Herculean efforts to respond to the challenges of COVID–19.

Overall, 72 percent of parents say their schools provide excellent or good-quality education, and 78 percent endorse the quality and performance of their teachers.

In addition, teachers unions are seen by parents as a more positive force in education today than prior to the pandemic, mirroring public polling that shows record-high support for the labor movement as a whole. Visit nysut.cc/aftsurvey.

Still, this unprecedented challenge to public education has completely stressed the system and society in general. But educators are not the problem. They are the solution.

“This false narrative that teachers want schools closed is just that: fiction,” said Kara McCormick-Lyons, president of the White Plains Teachers Association in Westchester. “We want our kids healthy, and we want them in our classrooms.”

Joseph Ricca, White Plains superintendent, agreed. “Unions, teachers, administrators are not keeping children out of school,” he said. “The virus is.”

It’s difficult, in large part, because the students and staff who get sick — especially during the explosive omicron variant surge — are not in class. Flexibility and cooperation are keys to getting through each day.

“Teachers are doing everything they can to not only make up for the kids who are unable to attend regularly, but to cover for each other,” said Juliet Benaquisto, president of the Schenectady Federation of Teachers.

When teachers are absent, after testing positive or to care for their own children who are quarantined, those who are present fill up their day covering colleagues’ classes, as well as their own.

The numbers crunch is a constant challenge. Schools need more teachers, all kinds of School-Related Professionals, health care professionals and counselors.

AFT President Randi Weingarten recently visited the White Plains and Schenectady districts, both of which have been open all year. She was uplifted by the progress she witnessed.

“From watching pre-K kiddos learning to use scissors, to talking with high-schoolers discussing gender pay gaps, I witnessed educators helping kids succeed while keeping themselves and their kids safe,” she said.

“Educators are doing amazing work in horrible circumstances. This polling shows the virus is our enemy, not each other,” Weingarten said. Parents say, “teachers are heroes for their efforts.”

Even so, recent data from the National Education Association, NYSUT’s other national affiliate, shows staffing storm clouds gathering quickly on the horizon.

Alarming, more than half of the responding educators, 55 percent, said they plan to leave education sooner than planned because of the pandemic. Find it at https://nysut.cc/neasurvey.

NYSUT’s Future Forward initiative (futureforwardny.org) prescribes solutions to many of the current problems wrapped in a vision for a better future for public education.

FF outlines how to support schools as the centers of our communities; to support students’ social-emotional needs; to fight for racial justice, which includes the statewide union’s efforts to diversify the teacher workforce through its Take a Look at Teaching initiative; to de-emphasize high-stakes testing; and to adopt best practices for instruction and technology.

“NYSUT is focused on identifying solutions to our challenges that will strengthen the core of our communities — our public schools,” Pallotta said.
NYSUT awards more ‘Grow Your Own’ grants to stem teacher shortage

By Sylvia Saunders
sylvia.saunders@nysut.org

S

ometimes all it takes is a tap on the shoulder from a trusted teacher, an after-school tutoring program—or an inspiring college visit to plant a seed for a future educator.

“There are so many ways for us to nurture aspiring teachers, and often the best place to start is right in our own communities,” said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. “It’s about eliminating barriers and providing support all along the way.”

To plant more seeds, NYSUT has awarded a second round of “Grow Your Own” grants to more than a dozen local unions planning a variety of activities to encourage more people to consider a career in education.

The $4,000-$5,000 GYO grants will go to: East Syracuse-Minoa United Teachers, Farmingdale Federation of Teachers, Lansingburgh Teachers Association, Lewiston-Porter UT, Long Beach Classroom TA, Newark TA, Niagara-Wheatfield TA, Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers, Port Jefferson Station TA, Rockville Centre TA, Saranac TA, Starpoint TA and Windsor TA.

The grants are an outgrowth of NYSUT’s Take a Look at Teaching initiative, which began four years ago to address the teacher shortage and improve diversity in the educator workforce. The union-led initiative is funded through a three-year, $675,000 grant from the National Education Association.

In a conference call with local union leaders, DiBrango noted the latest round of applications focus on first-generation college-bound high school students; rural school initiatives; engaging families and paraprofessionals; and attracting more students of color into education careers. Grants will be used for TALAT clubs, after-school programs, internships, expansion of career and technical programs, mentoring experiences, guest speakers and college campus visits.

Research has shown that GYO programs can be a highly effective way to boost recruitment and retention. A study of GYO programs found that not only do they help teaching candidates become certified and get jobs, participants are more likely to stay in the profession in the long run.

“GYO participants are connected and committed to their communities and are more likely to stay,” DiBrango said. “They are also strong role models for future generations.”

A study by the Pathways to Teaching Career initiative found that retention rates tend to be higher for GYO participants. Of the teachers who participated in GYO programs, 81 percent were still teaching three years later, compared to 71 percent of beginning teachers overall. And for School-Related Professionals who went through the program, the three-year retention rate was 88 percent.

NYSUT’s website takealookatteaching.org offers a variety of resources for GYO efforts, including how to start a Take a Look at Teaching Club and a model course of study with a menu of activities. A TALAT Google classroom is in the works to provide a collaborative space to share engagement, exploration and immersion ideas. The materials are free for anyone interested in encouraging more people to consider education careers.

Last fall, NYSUT awarded a first round of GYO grants to a dozen local unions: Brentwood Teacher Center, Greece TA, North Syracuse EA, Pittsford TA, Sag Harbor TA, Spencerport TA, Syracuse TA, Utica TA, West Irondequoit TA, Yonkers Federation of Teachers, United Federation of Teachers and Suffolk County Community College FA.

Projects funded through United University Professions include grants for University at Albany, Buffalo State, Empire State College, Binghamton University and SUNY Plattsburgh.

“Our grants are meant to get folks started, but more funding is needed to make these programs sustainable and truly successful,” DiBrango said.
Tell me about your job and why you love what you do.

As a teaching assistant in the classroom, my job was to assist in the educational and social development of the students. I assisted with the implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) and monitored the students’ progress. I supported students with emotional or behavioral concerns and assisted them in developing appropriate social skills. The thing I loved most about my job was the interaction with my students, learning from them, helping them understand the content of their courses. I loved to see when they make the connection between what they are learning and their lives.

What was your path to union advocacy?

As a kid, I saw the passion that both my parents had toward union rights, as part of making a decision when fighting for and supporting their colleagues. I joined my union right away in 2000. I learned how to advocate for myself and my colleagues. I became a building rep, was elected to the Executive Board, served in various committees and recently became the full-time secretary/treasurer of my local.

How do you make a difference?

I make a difference when I build positive relationships with the members, students and community. I focus on their needs and how I can support them.

I make a difference when I can be the voice for those who need a voice or representation on many levels.

I make a difference when I see the smiles on people’s faces or receive a thank you for my support.

What do you do for fun? Hobbies?

I enjoy my time with family and friends. I volunteer a lot at work, doing union business. I support the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk, the labor parade and rallies. I support all events and activities from my union. I love working with cars in my free time. My goal is to keep working with my union to make a difference in the members’ lives.
ATTENTION TEACHERS!

"NO FEES"
UNION MORTGAGE PROGRAM

Application Fee $0
Appraisal Fee $0
Processing Fee $0
Credit Report Fee $0
Points to Us $0
Broker Fees to Us $0

TOTAL Union Member Mortgage Fees $0

• Celebrating our 20th Anniversary
• Saved Union Members Over $50 Million in Fees
• More than 35,000 Mortgage Loans Closed
• We are the #1 Originator of Union Only Loans
• Originator of “True No Fee” Loans

Receive a $500.00 Closing Cost Credit
Towards your mortgage closing cost in addition to our “No Fees” Mortgage Loan Program for Union Memberships. Co-ops Excluded.

Members Mortgage Corp.
35 Pinelawn Road, Suite 100E, Melville, New York 11747
1-833-99-UNION | MembersMortgageCorp.com
#notjustphysical: Teen dating abuse comes in many forms

By Liza Frenette
liza.frenette@nysut.org

As a school social worker, Christina Rufo has observed that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to dating abuse. What begins as put-downs, jealous reactions or controlling behavior can turn harmful and even dangerous. School social worker Christina Rufo, Solvay TA, makes sure teens in her Central New York district have access to the resources they need to stay informed and safe.

Calling attention to harmful relationships is a mission that many school social workers, counselors and psychologists continue to promote through education in a joint state and national campaign that began with February’s Teen Dating Abuse Awareness Month.

Teens often do not yet have experience in healthy relationships, so they may not realize when things are off track until they are in deep. They are trying to strike out on their own as young adults, and they can easily mistake jealousy for love. Jealousy has become a more threatening issue with the proliferation of social media.

“Kids who are prone to jealousy are monitoring platforms,” said Rufo, a member of the Solvay Teachers Association. She explained that a boyfriend might see photos of his girlfriend on her social media and then ask, “Why were you wearing that outfit? Why is some other guy commenting on your post?”

“All the different platforms have created a breeding ground for increased anxiety and controlling behavior in people already prone to that,” Rufo said.

Sexting is also alarming behavior and can be used for control. In some dating situations, teens can be victims of sexual violence from coercion or forced touching to sexual trafficking.

Unhealthy treatment can begin with put-downs, which are often mislabeled as “joking.” Teens often think some behaviors, like teasing and name-calling, are a “normal” part of a relationship. But these behaviors can become abusive and develop into serious forms of violence, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Hair pulling, punching, slapping and pinching are physical forms of abuse. Guilt and shame are psychological abuse. Stalking is another form of abuse.

Rufo has established resources to deal with dating violence on her Central New York district’s website under social, emotional and mental health. Resources include links to local residential and advocacy centers, sites.google.com/solvayschools.org/selmh/student-resources.

The New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence is spreading awareness about dating abuse and providing resources to educate and help teens. The OPDV site includes access to support with a 24/7 phone number or online chat available.

“It’s difficult for teens to talk to parents. They feel embarrassed,” Rufo said. “They are afraid of the repercussions from parents, or fearful of what their peers will think.” She said her district is working as a team to help enlighten students about dating abuse.

“As we talk more about social-emotional learning, it comes out. It’s also in books that are being discussed,” Rufo said.

Studying historical events, such as women’s suffrage, can generate questions to students, including “How do you advocate for yourself?” Rufo explained.

The school psychologists, social workers and counselors have a vital role to play, which is one of the many reasons NYSUT is advocating to lawmakers for one of each of them in every building as part of its Future Forward initiative.

“In today’s world, it’s pretty significant to have resources available at the place where they’re spending the most time,” Rufo said.

Providing a safe space for teens to talk, and knowing the signs that can signal concern, are vital to help students. Teens who are homeless, who have disabilities, or who are LGBTQ+ are even more vulnerable to dating abuse, reports the state OPDV.

What does “dating abuse” look like?

Signs of potential dating abuse include:
- Decreased or lost attachments with family/loved ones
- Frequent arguing, fighting
- Unable to attend events without partner
- Isolating from prior friends/activities
- Significant age difference in the couple
- Becoming uncharacteristically emotional, anxious, weepy, edgy
- Frequent breaking up and getting back together
- Constant texting
- Using more makeup, or none at all

Boundaries can change
but they should always make you feel good about yourself and your relationship.

Resources:
The New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence includes access to advocates.
Call 800-942-6906
Text 844-997-2121
Chat at opdv.ny.gov
BETTER EDUCATION BEGINS WITH YOU

Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction

Create an impactful curricular- or community-based project that enhances learning in P-12 education.
• Fully online
• 30 credit hours
• Flexible course schedules
• Affordable SUNY tuition

Learn more at www.esc.edu/MEd

SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

HARRIS PLASTIC SURGERY
COSMETIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE PLASTIC SURGERY
“Creating Beautiful Natural Results”

BREAST REDUCTION SURGERY
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

WE OFFER MINIMAL INCISION BREAST REDUCTION PROCEDURES
RAPID ONE WEEK RECOVERY
EXPERTISE IN OBTAINING INSURANCE AUTHORIZATIONS
SURGERY CAN BE PERFORMED OVER HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS/SUMMER BREAKS
SPECIAL PRICING FOR BODY CONTOURING PERFORMED AT THE TIME
OF BREAST REDUCTION

PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE TO SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION

STEPHEN U. HARRIS, M.D., FACS
Board Certified Plastic Surgeon
Chief of Plastic Surgery, Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, West Islip, NY

500 Montauk Highway, Suite H, West Islip, NY
631•422•9100
www.harrisplasticsurgery.com

Synchrony

Dream bigger. Go further. Save more.

Synchrony Bank is pleased to offer NYSUT members preferred rates that are .05% higher than our advertised rates. And with no monthly fee or minimum balances on our products, it’s easier than ever to strengthen your savings strategy. Visit synchronybank.com/members for our current rates (member code SYNCHRONY40) or call 800-901-2965.

Member FDIC © 2022 Synchrony Bank

Scan for current rates

Synchrony Bank is pleased to offer NYSUT members preferred rates that are .05% higher than our advertised rates. And with no monthly fee or minimum balances on our products, it’s easier than ever to strengthen your savings strategy. Visit synchronybank.com/members for our current rates (member code SYNCHRONY40) or call 800-901-2965.

Dream bigger. Go further. Save more.

Synchrony Bank is pleased to offer NYSUT members preferred rates that are .05% higher than our advertised rates. And with no monthly fee or minimum balances on our products, it’s easier than ever to strengthen your savings strategy. Visit synchronybank.com/members for our current rates (member code SYNCHRONY40) or call 800-901-2965.

BETTER EDUCATION BEGINS WITH YOU

Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction

Create an impactful curricular- or community-based project that enhances learning in P-12 education.
• Fully online
• 30 credit hours
• Flexible course schedules
• Affordable SUNY tuition

Learn more at www.esc.edu/MEd

SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

HARRIS PLASTIC SURGERY
COSMETIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE PLASTIC SURGERY
“Creating Beautiful Natural Results”

BREAST REDUCTION SURGERY
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

WE OFFER MINIMAL INCISION BREAST REDUCTION PROCEDURES
RAPID ONE WEEK RECOVERY
EXPERTISE IN OBTAINING INSURANCE AUTHORIZATIONS
SURGERY CAN BE PERFORMED OVER HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS/SUMMER BREAKS
SPECIAL PRICING FOR BODY CONTOURING PERFORMED AT THE TIME
OF BREAST REDUCTION

PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE TO SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION

STEPHEN U. HARRIS, M.D., FACS
Board Certified Plastic Surgeon
Chief of Plastic Surgery, Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center, West Islip, NY

500 Montauk Highway, Suite H, West Islip, NY
631•422•9100
www.harrisplasticsurgery.com

Synchrony

Dream bigger. Go further. Save more.

Synchrony Bank is pleased to offer NYSUT members preferred rates that are .05% higher than our advertised rates. And with no monthly fee or minimum balances on our products, it’s easier than ever to strengthen your savings strategy. Visit synchronybank.com/members for our current rates (member code SYNCHRONY40) or call 800-901-2965.

Member FDIC © 2022 Synchrony Bank

Scan for current rates

Synchrony Bank is pleased to offer NYSUT members preferred rates that are .05% higher than our advertised rates. And with no monthly fee or minimum balances on our products, it’s easier than ever to strengthen your savings strategy. Visit synchronybank.com/members for our current rates (member code SYNCHRONY40) or call 800-901-2965.

Dream bigger. Go further. Save more.

Synchrony Bank is pleased to offer NYSUT members preferred rates that are .05% higher than our advertised rates. And with no monthly fee or minimum balances on our products, it’s easier than ever to strengthen your savings strategy. Visit synchronybank.com/members for our current rates (member code SYNCHRONY40) or call 800-901-2965.
NYSUT has a network of 11 retiree services consultants who serve as liaisons between retired members, retiree councils and NYSUT headquarters. In honor of the 30th anniversary of NYSUT retiree councils, we’re highlighting each regional consultant so retiree members know who to contact for assistance. Meet the four consultants representing Central and Western New York: Anne Marie Voutsinas, Janet Goddard, Peter Randazzo and Louise Ortman.

Anne Marie Voutsinas represents Retiree Councils 7 and 8, encompassing the counties of Cayuga, Onondaga, Oswego, Oneida and Madison. A former Syracuse Teachers Association president, middle school math teacher and Syracuse Teacher Center director, Voutsinas retired in 2011 and took over as RC 7 and 8 consultant in 2014. A big focus of her work is keeping members connected. After surveying in-service presidents in the spring, “we found that connections are often lost when school emails shut down after retirement,” said Voutsinas, noting that the lost addresses often lead to severed connections with the in-service local. “We try to maintain that connection with all NYSUT members when they retire.”

Janet Goddard represents RC 1-3 and 44, encompassing the counties of Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee and parts of Western Wyoming County. As a former member of the NYSUT Board of Directors, ED 2 director and Retiree Councils 1-3 Board trustee representing RC 2, Goddard is an experienced unionist; she’s also one of NYSUT’s newest consultants, assuming the post in January. “Union involvement has always been second nature to me,” said Goddard. “I’ve always been involved in the union,” said Randazzo, who headed the Spencerport TA for 18 years. After spending a few months “just relaxing” post retirement, he considered the RC position a logical next step in his union activism.

Louise Ortman represents RC 4 and 46, encompassing the counties of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany, Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and a Western slice of Tioga. Ortman, a 2007 elementary music teacher retiree and 15-year Bloomfield Professional Education Association president, became a consultant in 2008. “When I started, one of my missions was to round up former NEA/NY retirees,” said Ortman noting that many who retired in June of 2006, or earlier, before NEA/NY and NYSUT merged, don’t realize they can join NYSUT retiree chapters at no cost. “There are huge pockets of former NEA locals throughout Western and Southwestern New York.”
**5 QUESTIONS FOR ...**

Deb Berger
Southern Adirondack Substitute Teachers Alliance

1. After teaching more than three decades at Groversville Middle School, you retired and returned to the classroom as a substitute teacher. At 75, you still go in every day! Why do you do it?

   When I retired I felt I needed a change and worked as a secretary in a realtor’s office. But I really felt like I was missing something in my new retired life ... I realized I had missed that connection to “my” kids, so I gave subbing a try. That was about 17 years ago. Amazing, right? I get up every day, looking forward to going to school. I enjoy what I am doing. It’s teaching without creating lesson plans and observations. Although I’m a certified English teacher, the special education department has “adopted” me. Who knew? When I work longer terms with the same students, I promise them in ninth grade that I will be there when they graduate ... I’ve gone to several graduations in June and the summer. Once a teacher, always a teacher.

2. Why do you think there is such a shortage of substitute teachers?

   Some of our members are apprehensive about returning to the classroom environment due to COVID-19. We seem to have lost many of the retired, experienced teachers who used to substitute on a regular basis. I continued subbing over the last two years — I share the concerns that teachers and students have with remote learning. Nothing replaces the importance of the teacher and students in the classroom.

3. What can districts do to recruit and retain subs?

   Many subs have told me they will go to districts where they feel comfortable, appreciated and not overused. Pay is a factor: some districts that have been having a difficult time recruiting substitutes have raised daily rates by $10 or $20. Since many of the subs work because they need the income to live on, they are now going to districts that pay more.

4. With staff shortages, some states have resorted to bringing in the National Guard and state workers as substitute teachers. Our governor has proposed raising the cap on how much retired teachers can earn. Will that help?

   Raising the cap would be a great incentive. I speak as a teacher who ended up having to pay back the NYSTRS because over a two-year period I earned too much. I would think bringing in the National Guard would become more of a disruption to the students. Seeing familiar faces (retired teachers) is always easier for the students. There is no age limit to subbing. You can sub a half day a week or every day each week. You work to your comfort level.

5. You’re the local president of NYSUT’s Southern Adirondack Substitute Teachers Alliance, with members in more than a dozen districts. Why should subs belong to the union?

   The union acts to protect us, defend us if necessary, and negotiate for better pay and benefits. We offer good benefits and help when people need advice. Some say, “I never have a problem” or “I don’t need someone to help me.” Well, during the pandemic, I was getting emails on a daily basis from our members about how to qualify for unemployment insurance. Luckily, our small union has the support of NYSUT and their experts. There’s strength in numbers.
FOR RENT

VACATION RENTAL
ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH — Three-bedroom, two-bath condominium. NYSUT discount. rj@jobers.com. May–October. $850/week. 518-582-3215.


SERVICES
FREE TAX RETURNS
For 1st Year Teachers & Paras
All others: 50% discount
Free list of 75 job deductions
IRS enrolled agent with over 30 years experience
TEACHER TAX SPECIALIST
516-829-7283
516-TAX-SAVE
The Chief's Tax Columnist!!

EDUCATION
ARE CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE problems ruining your teaching career? Make classroom misbehavior a thing of the past. FREE book for NYSUT-UFU members. Act now! Why wait? Email: teacherservices044@gmail.com. (Please include your name and address) or write: Free discipline book, 1941 Edward Lane, Merrick, NY 11566.

2022 Summary of Material Modifications
NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary of Material Modifications and Notice to Participants
(Plan No.: 503; I.D. No.: 22-2480854)
Dated: March 2022
The following is a summary of important changes made to endorsed benefit programs since the publication of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description in March 2021 and the subsequent NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary of Material Modifications and Notice to Participants dated March 2021. Please retain this information until a new Summary Plan Description is issued to you.

Trustees News
Carolyn Kube was appointed as a new Trustee of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust at the December 2021 NYSUT Board of Trustees meeting (replacing Thomas Tucker). The current list of Trustees of the Member Benefits Trust includes Chairperson J. Philippe Abraham, Secretary Roderick P. Sherman, Loretta Donlon, Matthew Hill, Ms. Kube, Thomas McMahon, Kevin Peterman and Angelina Rivera.

Legal Service Plan, Group Access Legal Service Plan & Group Prepaid Legal Service Plan
Participants who need assistance for new legal matters arising in the State of Florida should contact the National Legal Office of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C., rather than the Glantz Law firm.

Personal Property & Liability Insurance Plan
Farmers Property & Casualty Insurance Company completed its purchase of the Auto & Home book of business from MetLife in April 2021. The Farmers Insurance Choice platform offered by Farmers GroupSelect allows NYSUT members to choose from multiple highly rated insurance carriers, featuring competitive prices and savings for stand-alone or bundled auto and home policies.

Special group rates, coverage and discounts offered through this program are available in most states to those who qualify. Eligibility guidelines and financial arrangements remain the same. NYSUT members who purchase auto, home or renter’s policies from Farmers GroupSelect receive access to identity protection services through Farmers’ service provider CyberScout at no additional cost.

The phone number for this program remains 866-697-8822 and mailing address remains P.O. Box 671, Warwick, RI 02887.

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5.5% of total premiums for this program.

Financial Arrangements
Financial arrangements between the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust and the providers of the following endorsed programs have changed:
The Group Vision Care Plan & Group Voluntary Vision Care Plan, which are provided and administered by Davis Vision, are self-insured by Member Benefits for groups with guaranteed rate contracts, meaning total premiums collected and claims paid are pooled annually. At the end of the plan year, any surplus funds revert to Member Benefits. For the last 10-year period, a surplus equaling 14.09% of paid premiums has resulted.

As of January 1, 2022, Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 27.5% of annual participation fees for the Legal Service Plan. As of January 1, 2022, Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 13% of annual participation fees for the Group Access and Group Prepaid Legal Service Plans.

Sincerely,
Board of Trustees
NYSUT Member Benefits Trust

PRIVACY NOTICE
NYSUT Member Benefits, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455, 800-626-8101, Plan No.: 503; EIN: 22-2480854
Notification of Availability of Privacy Notice
[As required by 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 160.520(c)(1)(ii)]
In the course of providing you with access to health benefits, Member Benefits has access to information about you, which may be consid-
ed protected health information (PHI) under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations. As a participant of Member Benefits, you were previously provided, either through publication in the NYSUT United publication or USPS mail, with a Privacy Notice describing our privacy practices, legal duties and rights concerning your PHI. If you would like to receive another copy of our Privacy Notice, you can download a copy from our website at memberbenefits.nysut.org, or you can contact Member Benefits’ Privacy Official Betsy Porter at 800-626-8101 or by submitting to the above address a written request for a copy.

Sincerely,
Board of Trustees,
NYSUT Member Benefits Trust

[ PASSINGS ]
Wendy Bernard | Nov. 17, 2021
Retiree Council 39
Rosemary Catanzariti | Feb. 6, 2022
Glen Cove Teachers Association
Richard Conley | Jan. 16, 2022
Hudson Falls Teachers Association
Julie L. Dentinger | Dec. 10, 2021
Orchard Park Teachers Association
Nicholas Farinacci | July 2, 2021
United Federation of Teachers
Barbara D. Gordon | April 15, 2021
Wappingers Congress of Teachers
Elmer C. Henretta | Dec. 5, 2021
Rochester Teachers Association
Bernice Jagoda | June 14, 2021
United Federation of Teachers
Patricia King | Jan. 14, 2021
Wappingers Congress of Teachers
John E. Mack | Dec. 29, 2021
United University Professions - Buffalo State
Barbara Paronett | Dec. 25, 2021
Phoenix Central Schools Teachers Association
David Schmidt | Jan. 3, 2022
Retiree Council 9
Frank Spinner | Nov. 29, 2021
Niagara Falls Teachers
Jeffrey Van Brink | April 22, 2021
East Meadow Teachers Association
Eileen Zipes | March 15, 2021
Wappingers Congress 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 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455; or email julie.malec@nysut.org.
Ilze Earner remembers the awkwardness of growing up poor after her family moved to the United States from a refugee camp in France. She found salvation at 5 years old, when her older brother took her on a roadside pony ride. “That was it,” she said. Earner bartered work for riding lessons, and even competed. Now, she is a volunteer who has created a summer literacy program for students ages 9–13 at a horse farm in Hudson.

“Having horses in my life meant a lot to me,” said Earner, a newly retired CUNY Hunter College professor of social work and Professional Staff Congress member. “I felt a sense of power and control on top of a horse I didn’t feel anywhere else.”

Earner reads a chapter to students in the Reading and Riding program at Whispering Meadows; next, students read the same chapter to the horses, then journal, using the new vocabulary. They also help to clean stalls, groom the horses and lead them around the barn, all to build confidence, keep the students engaged and socialize the horses.

Earner formerly worked as a consultant at an Ulster County residential school. She brought students outside weekly to be with horses, noting the confines of a classroom can cause more acting out. Here, “you really need to get quiet with yourself,” said Eileen Cunningham, a volunteer with the Reading and Riding program and retired school librarian with the Spackenkill TA.

To learn more about Earner’s work, visit nysut.org/itswhatwedo.

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

---

Save up to 15% on Member Benefits-endorsed programs

Automating your finances can save you time and money. If you’re still writing and mailing out checks for bills, consider the convenience and savings of using payroll or pension deduction when purchasing NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

With payroll or pension deduction, you will never have to write checks or remember important premium due dates for many of our endorsed programs.

The buying power of more than 600,000 NYSUT members, on its own, generates meaningful savings. However, members taking advantage of either payroll or pension deduction as a payment option may save even more — up to 15 percent. If you want to enjoy these additional discounts and eliminate service fees, join the more than 90,000 NYSUT members who currently utilize payroll or pension deduction to pay for Member Benefits programs.

Budgeting becomes easier

Using payroll or pension deduction can make budgeting more manageable since premiums are divided into smaller payments deducted from your paycheck or monthly pension benefit.

These payment options also help to minimize your environmental footprint since the printing and mailing of paper bills is eliminated. NYSUT members see these savings passed on to them through reduced premiums and/or the elimination of service fees for many endorsed programs.

Payroll or pension deduction is currently available for the following Member Benefits programs: Auto Insurance; Catastrophe Major Medical Insurance (not available to new applicants); Dental & Vision Plans (pension deduction only for vision plan); Disability Insurance (payroll deduction only); Financial Counseling Program; Home, Renter’s & Boat Insurance; Legal Service Plan; MetLife Long-Term Care Insurance (not available to new applicants); Personal Excess Liability Insurance; Purchasing Power (payroll deduction only); Term Life & Level Term Life Insurance; and WrapPlan® II Universal Life Insurance.

Are you eligible for payroll/pension deduction?

Almost 90 percent of NYSUT members have payroll or pension deduction already in place. If your local association has arranged for payroll deduction with its employer, you are eligible to use this payment option.

Pension deduction is available to retirees collecting a monthly pension benefit from the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System, New York City Teachers’ Retirement System, New York State Employees’ Retirement System, or New York City Board of Education Retirement System. It is also an option for retirees receiving a monthly lifetime annuity from TIAA.

Important note: You must have an active NYSUT membership as an in-service or retiree member to participate in payroll or pension deduction of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

How to get started

1. Select either payroll or pension deduction at the time of application for any of our eligible programs.
2. Fill out the appropriate authorization form and return it with your application.
3. Please do NOT send any payment! Member Benefits will be notified of the change and advise your employer’s business office or retirement system to begin your deductions.

If you already participate in any of the programs referenced above and are currently paying through direct bill, you can convert to payroll or pension deduction when your premium is up for renewal (if these payment options are available to you).

When you receive your premium renewal notice, mail it along with a signed payroll or pension deduction authorization form (included with your renewal notice) to the address indicated. If it is not included, contact Member Benefits to request the appropriate form.

You can learn more about payroll/pension deduction of Member Benefits-endorsed programs by visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling 800-626-8101.

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

If you work for a public employer in New York state in a non-teaching position, you may be a member of the New York State and Local Employees’ Retirement System, or you may be eligible to join ERS.

ERS membership is mandatory for full-time, permanent 12-month positions. Membership is generally optional if you are: a full-time 10-month school employee, employed in a temporary position, or if your work schedule is less than what your employer considers full time. (Independent contractors and consultants are not eligible to join.)

When you join ERS, you are assigned to a tier, based on your date of membership. Your tier determines contribution requirements, benefit eligibility and the formulas used to calculate retirement benefits. Members who join on or after April 1, 2012, are in Tier 6, and most are in the Article 15 Retirement Plan. Find plan information at osc.state.ny.us/retirement/publications/1530.

Tier 6 members pay membership contributions based on their annual earnings — anywhere from 3 percent to 6 percent. Members can purchase service for prior public employment, however the cost of the service credit purchased by Tier 6 members is based on 6 percent of their earnings. Questions about ERS membership eligibility? Visit contactNYSLRS.com.

ERS plans are defined-benefit plans, which means your pension will be a lifetime benefit. Benefits are based on a preset formula that takes into account your salary and years of service. Defined contribution plans, for example 401(k) plans, provide benefits which depend on the investment returns of the individual account. In these plans, the individual is responsible for the investment risk, and generally the benefit is not a lifetime benefit. Read more at nyretirementnews.com/defined-benefit-plan.

For most members, if you leave public employment with fewer than 10 years of service, you may withdraw your contributions or roll them over to another qualified retirement plan. However, this would terminate your ERS membership.

Retirement Online, web.osc.state.ny.us/retire/sign-in.php, provides real-time access to your retirement account. For more info about ERS membership, visit our Membership in a Nutshell page at osc.state.ny.us/retirement/publications/life-changes-membership-nutshell.

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.

Working in retirement, and naming beneficiaries

Q: I retired in 2018 and receive a monthly pension benefit. After doing some per diem substitute work for my previous employer, I was approached about filing in for a long-term leave. What are the financial implications for me if I take the leave replacement?

A: Generally, 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.

However, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the earnings cap was temporarily suspended for retired public-sector workers who re-enter the workforce during the pandemic. Any pay earned from Sept. 27, 2021 through March 1, 2022, won’t count toward the annual retiree earnings cap. Contact NYSTRS at 800-348-7298, ext. 6150 with questions.

Q: Is it possible to name one person as your pension benefit recipient, and a second person as your in-service death beneficiary?

A: Yes, it is. Your in-service death benefit is separate from your pension benefit. If you die before retiring, the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System pays both an in-service death benefit, and the balance of your retirement contributions, to your beneficiaries. Since the payments are separate, you can select different beneficiaries for each.

If you haven’t already named a contingent beneficiary for your account, the new year is a good time to do so. Having a contingent beneficiary adds an extra level of protection if your primary beneficiary dies. If you don’t have one, NYSTRS will pay any benefits directly to your estate.

Did you know?
The NYSTRS Board unanimously adopted a climate change action plan at its Dec. 28 meeting. The move ends further fund investment in 20 oil and gas and thermal coal reserve holdings.

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)
Juliet Benaquisto • 518-807-7085
juliet.benaquisto@nysut.org
Beth Chetney • 315-431-4040
beth.chetney@nysut.org
Eric Iberger • 518-376-4333
eric.iberger@nysut.org

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).
Experiencing Spine Pain? Let’s do spine health the NEW way.

**SPINE PAIN | The OLD Way**

**STEP 1:** Visit PCP with back or neck pain

**STEP 2:** Physical Therapy or chiropractic care 2-3x/week

**STEP 3:** Series of pain management therapies

**STEP 4:** Consult with a spine specialist

**George V. Kakoulides, MD, FAANS, FACS**

Neurosurgery, Brain and Spine Specialist

**Elvis W. Rema, MD**

Anesthesiologist Interventional Pain Management

www.epain.net

**SPINE PAIN | The NEW Way**

**STEP 1:** Spine specialist for baseline evaluation

**STEP 2:** Diagnose the cause of your pain

**STEP 3:** Medically manage your symptoms as you progress for a better quality of life

**STEP 4:** Discuss surgical intervention when appropriate

**GKMD**

An affiliate of Long Island Brain & Spine

To book a consultation, please call
(631) 358-2589
www.gkmdspine.com

To learn more about on-site district or group employee spine screenings, please call 516-310-4738

With locations throughout Long Island and Kingston, New York

---

**SUCCESSFUL HOME OWNERSHIP STARTS WITH A CONVERSATION.**

At Citizens Bank, we’re ready to help you find the financing that’s right for you. So, before you fall in love with a home, let us help you figure out how much you can borrow with a prequalification assessment.

**WE CAN HELP YOU WITH:**

- First-time home buyer programs
- FHA/VA/SONYMA loan programs
- Jumbo loan programs
- Refinancing your current mortgage for a lower payment or cash out

**If you have a questions about home financing, call Dan Moschetti today.**

**Dan Moschetti, Sales Manager**

NMLS ID: 420643
daniel.moschetti@citizensbank.com
845-222-9844
lo.citizensbank.com/dmoschetti

---

**EVERY CONCEIVABLE OPTION**

Your goal is to start a family, and our life’s work is to make that happen. Here at Kofinas Fertility Group, we’re true experts in fertility medicine, and every solvable fertility situation is within our capability.

Get started today by scheduling an appointment!

- Customized care plans based on your individual fertility needs
- Laparoscopic, hysteroscopic, robotic, & microsurgical procedures
- In vitro fertilization (IVF) + Egg freezing for fertility preservation
- Embryo biopsy & genetic testing + Family balancing (gender selection)
- Egg donor program + Recurrent pregnancy loss

**To learn more:**

Call (718) 736-2565 or visit kofinasfertility.com

**WE WORK WITH MOST CITY, STATE AND EMPLOYER INSURANCE PLANS**

LOWER MANHATTAN
65 BROADWAY 14TH FLOOR

UPPER WEST SIDE
55 CENTRAL PARK WEST

BROOKLYN
116 3RD AVENUE

STATEN ISLAND
1586 RICHMOND AVE. SUITE 202

---

Mortgages are offered and originated by Citizens Bank, N.A. Citizens Bank is a brand name of Citizens Bank, N.A. (NMLS ID: 433960) All loans are subject to approval. Equal Housing Lender. CS#801755_Dan Moschetti_4.75x6

---

26 | March/April 2022 Official Publication of NYSUT
NYSUT Women’s History Month poster honors work of Malala Yousafzai

NYSUT celebrates Women’s History Month with a new poster honoring Malala Yousafzai, often referred to as Malala, a Pakistani activist for female education — particularly in her native land, which has sometimes banned girls from attending school. Malala was shot in 2012 by a Taliban gunman on her way home from school, after speaking publicly about girls’ right to learn.

In 2014, at age 17, she became the world’s youngest Nobel Prize laureate and the second Pakistani to ever receive a Nobel Prize. In 2015, she was the subject of the Oscar-shortlisted documentary “He Named Me Malala.” In 2013, 2014 and 2015, Time magazine featured her as one of the most influential people globally. Awarded honorary Canadian citizenship in 2017, she became the youngest person to address Canada’s House of Commons.

Her advocacy has grown into an international movement. She co-founded the Malala Fund, a non-profit organization that promotes girls’ education, with Shiza Shahid. She also co-authored the autobiographical book I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban, with Christina Lamb.

NYSUT, a statewide union of professionals, is proud to honor the contributions of women throughout history. Like Malala, NYSUT believes in a world where all children, regardless of their gender, have access to a complete education, and the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

Downloadable PDF versions and printed copies of this poster are free, in limited quantities, to NYSUT members. For a free download of this and past Women’s History Month posters, visit nysut.org/publications.

Virtual student art exhibit to return

The NYSUT Subject Area Committee on the Arts is encouraging educators across the state to participate in its second annual virtual arts showcase. This year’s theme is Students of the Arts Imagine If...

The showcase will premier June 5 and is open to all the arts — music, theater, dance, visual and media arts. Teachers may submit up to five student visual arts entries and up to five videos featuring student performances.

Student work in visual arts, theater, music and media arts must be submitted by April 26; dance submissions must be received by May 11.

NYSUT’s 2021 showcase featured more than 100 students representing 30 schools across the state. Watch the NYSUT website for submission guidelines and more info. Contact Terry McSweeney at research@nysut.org.

Educator expense tax deduction renewed

Eligible educators can deduct up to $250 of qualified expenses you paid in 2021 on your federal taxes. If you and your spouse are filing jointly and both of you were eligible educators, the maximum deduction is $500. However, neither spouse can deduct more than $250 of their qualified expenses.

An eligible educator is a K-12 teacher, instructor, counselor, principal or aide who worked at least 900 hours in a school that provides elementary or secondary education as determined by state law.

Qualified expenses include:

- Books, supplies, equipment (including computer equipment, software and services), and other materials used in the classroom.
- Professional development courses related to the curriculum you teach or to the students you teach.
- Personal protective equipment, disinfectant, and other supplies used for the prevention of the spread of coronavirus.

An ordinary expense is one that is common and accepted in your educational field. A necessary expense is one that is helpful and appropriate for your profession. An expense doesn’t have to be required to be considered necessary.

For more info, consult your tax preparer and/or IRS Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax for Individuals.

Questions? Contact Amy Ethier at 800-342-9810, Amy.Ethier@nysut.org.

Save the date: Summer STEM institute

The New York State STEM Education Collaborative, Inc. is hosting its summer institute July 24–26 at SUNY Alfred under the theme, STEM 360 — Growing Opportunities in Changing Environments.

Attendees can gain up to 17 CTLE professional learning hours. Online registration and housing open April 25.

The group is also seeking presentations and posters, PK–20, that show how to integrate two or more STEM disciplines, with an emphasis on elementary STEM. For more info, visit nysstemeducation.org.

Virtual student art exhibit to return

The NYSUT Subject Area Committee on the Arts is encouraging educators across the state to participate in its second annual virtual arts showcase. This year’s theme is Students of the Arts Imagine If...

The showcase will premier June 5 and is open to all the arts — music, theater, dance, visual and media arts. Teachers may submit up to five student visual arts entries and up to five videos featuring student performances.

Student work in visual arts, theater, music and media arts must be submitted by April 26; dance submissions must be received by May 11.

NYSUT’s 2021 showcase featured more than 100 students representing 30 schools across the state. Watch the NYSUT website for submission guidelines and more info. Contact Terry McSweeney at research@nysut.org.

Educator expense tax deduction renewed

Eligible educators can deduct up to $250 of qualified expenses you paid in 2021 on your federal taxes. If you and your spouse are filing jointly and both of you were eligible educators, the maximum deduction is $500. However, neither spouse can deduct more than $250 of their qualified expenses.

An eligible educator is a K-12 teacher, instructor, counselor, principal or aide who worked at least 900 hours in a school that provides elementary or secondary education as determined by state law.

Qualified expenses include:

- Books, supplies, equipment (including computer equipment, software and services), and other materials used in the classroom.
- Professional development courses related to the curriculum you teach or to the students you teach.
- Personal protective equipment, disinfectant, and other supplies used for the prevention of the spread of coronavirus.

An ordinary expense is one that is common and accepted in your educational field. A necessary expense is one that is helpful and appropriate for your profession. An expense doesn’t have to be required to be considered necessary.

For more info, consult your tax preparer and/or IRS Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax for Individuals.

Questions? Contact Amy Ethier at 800-342-9810, Amy.Ethier@nysut.org.

Save the date: Summer STEM institute

The New York State STEM Education Collaborative, Inc. is hosting its summer institute July 24–26 at SUNY Alfred under the theme, STEM 360 — Growing Opportunities in Changing Environments.

Attendees can gain up to 17 CTLE professional learning hours. Online registration and housing open April 25.

The group is also seeking presentations and posters, PK–20, that show how to integrate two or more STEM disciplines, with an emphasis on elementary STEM. For more info, visit nysstemeducation.org.

NYSUT audit notice

NYSUT continues its practice of providing members with access to the union’s certified audit for their review. The annual audit for the fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2021, is available and can be found on the NYSUT Member Center at nysut.org/audit. Members may request a hard copy by contacting the NYSUT Accounting Department at 800-342-9810, or by sending an email to finance@nysut.org.
NYSUT members receive a 40% discount off tuition for graduate courses. ELT is now a CTLE provider and many courses are applicable for NYSED Certification. Register ONLINE

Advance your career
With NYSUT ELT:
• obtain advanced certificates & meet additional certification requirements
• increase student achievement
• collaborate with fellow educators across New York state — online or remote!

Explore all your union membership has to offer!

When you’re planning for the future, what’s at the top of your list?
• A comfortable nest egg for retirement
• Providing for your family
• Purchasing a new home
• Home improvements
• Purchasing a new vehicle
• Travel and entertainment

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs to help turn those dreams into reality.

Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling 800-626-8101.

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