

# NYSUT UNITED

A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

[www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org) | May 2017

## SPECIAL POST-RA EDITION

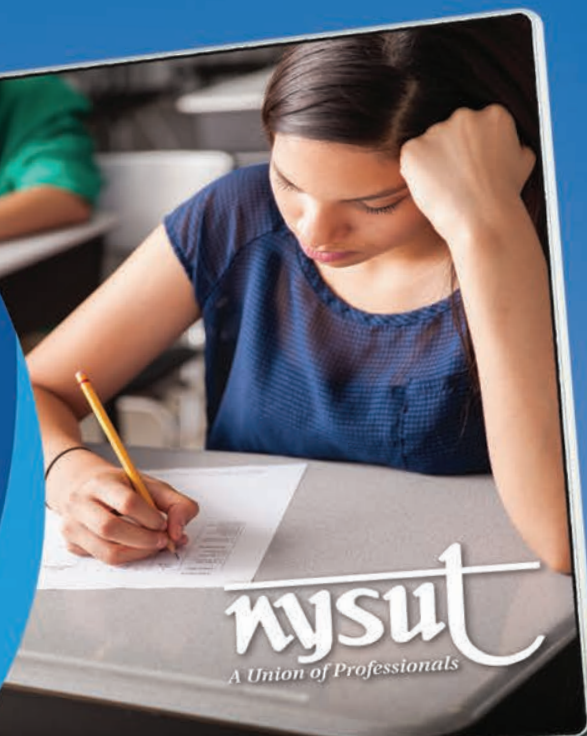
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THIS ISSUE OF NYSUT UNITED CONTAINS INFORMATION REGARDING THE NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT.

**Parents:  
Know your rights to  
opt your children out  
of state tests.**

Visit [nysut.org/optout](http://nysut.org/optout)



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President  
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and his team  
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# Union boosts LI teacher's bid for Assembly seat

By **NED HOSKIN**  
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

**N**YSUT has endorsed one of its own — Christine Pellegrino, a Baldwin teacher and staunch advocate for public education — in the May 23 special election for the open 9th Assembly District seat on Long Island.

A reading teacher at Brookside Elementary School and a member of the Baldwin Teachers Association, Pellegrino offers Albany — and her Nassau County district — expertise on how to rein in overtesting in favor of more teaching and learning.

She is the latest candidate to come out of NYSUT's Pipeline Project, which encourages NYSUT members to step up and run for office — school board, city or town council, county Legislature and even state Assembly and Senate.

"Our members see what's wrong," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta as he introduced Pellegrino at the 2017 NYSUT Representative Assembly. "They

want to be the change they want to see in the world."

Last year, NYSUT helped elect Monica Wallace, D-Cheektowaga, to the state Assembly. Wallace is a member of United University Professions, the NYSUT affiliate representing academic and professional faculty on SUNY campuses.

"This year we have an opportunity to do something else that may seem like a heavy lift," Pallotta said. "And we can do it if we work together."

Pellegrino is running as a Democrat and Working Families candidate in a heavily Republican Assembly district, where she has led the fight for local control of schools and against standardization that simply doesn't work for children.

"As an elementary school reading teacher for 15 years and a mother of two daughters in middle school, I care passionately about the fight for local control over our schools," Pellegrino said. "As a leader in the opt-out movement, I will



EL-WISE NOISETTE

Christine Pellegrino, an elementary teacher and member of the Baldwin Teachers Association, is seeking her first term in the state Assembly. The special election takes place May 23 and NYSUT is working non-stop to help her win the Long Island seat.

stand against the standardization efforts from Albany that harm our children and weaken our say in their future."

Pallotta said NYSUT is pulling out all the stops and encouraging activists from all over the state to get involved in winning this open seat.

The union's endorsement includes financial contributions to help offset the cost of Pellegrino's campaign. More importantly, he said, "We will work with Christine to put 'feet on the street.'"

NYSUT's support commits the energies of hundreds of volunteers to work on phone banks, hand out literature and attend rallies.

"This will be a race to watch," Pallotta said. "She is one of us, a star of our Pipeline Project, and we are thrilled to be supporting her candidacy."

Support Pellegrino at [pellegrinoforassembly.com](http://pellegrinoforassembly.com) or visit [mac.nysut.org](http://mac.nysut.org).

## Show your support for our public schools

By **NED HOSKIN**  
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

**W**ith just days before school budget votes and school board elections, time is running short.

Is there anything you, as a NYSUT local union member, can do? Absolutely!

Local school budget votes in most districts statewide take place Tuesday, May 16. Unfortunately, school boards will again have to deal with the ill-advised tax cap lawmakers passed in 2011. With limited ability to raise local revenue to make up for diminished state aid, student success is at risk.

Help your local union get out the YES votes! Ask your local president or your building rep how you can get involved.



Locals are using a variety of methods to let community residents know how their school budget proposals will affect them and their children.

NYSUT developed Vote Yes postcards that are available to local leaders

on NYSUT's website — [www.nysut.org/schoolbudget](http://www.nysut.org/schoolbudget) toolkit. Your union can host a "postcard party" for members, active parents and the PTO to address postcards to likely Yes voters in your community.

Working with your PTO and sports booster clubs, for example, your local could set up a phone banking network so teachers and parents can call other NYSUT members and other parents who share an important self-interest — passing the school budget on May 16.

Many unions work with principals or superintendents to hold school concerts, art exhibits or talent shows on budget night. It brings families with young children — likely YES voters — to the polls.

Take the campaign where parents with young children congregate — soccer and Little League fields and softball diamonds.

Don't leave any YES votes on the table. You can examine the voter rolls at the polling site. Union members — and PTO leaders — can bring their cell phones and at 6 p.m., begin calling those likely Yes voters who haven't yet cast their ballots.

Speak to newer NYSUT members in your local union to make sure they appreciate the importance of voting YES on their own school budgets.

Remember, when a person takes the time to speak to you, or anyone, about the school budget, there's a much better chance of that message sinking in — and getting them to VOTE YES.

# Worth the Wait

## Late state budget makes progress on many issues



By **NED HOSKIN**  
nhoskin@nysutmail.org

**D**ue to heroic, last-minute activism by NYSUT members who called, picketed, emailed and faxed their elected representatives, and the relentless efforts of NYSUT’s legislative staff, the final 2017-18 state budget provided incremental victories for public school advocates and higher education, and stopped some of the worst ideas floating around the Capitol.

“We always say: A late budget is better than a bad budget,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. “This year, the extra time was crucial as our lobbying and grassroots activism really helped turn the tide on key items and stem the tide on some dangerous threats.”

For example, Senate Republicans had considerable support to expand opportunities for corporate charter school operators, who give lavishly to the election campaigns of leading GOP senators. Many charter operators spent millions during budget negotiations to push for more aid and to expand the number of charters across the state.

NYSUT and its allies in the Democrat-controlled Assembly defeated the proposal to eliminate or increase the charter

cap; stopped a proposal to unfreeze charter school tuition rates, which would have enriched operators by hundreds of millions of dollars; rejected plans to make districts pay for School-Related Professionals needed at charters; and rejected statewide building aid.

Charters did receive some additional public funding, but nowhere near what the private profiteers were seeking.

The union’s efforts also helped defeat the proposal to eliminate the Foundation Aid Formula. NYSUT will continue to fight to protect the formula as well as advocate for progressive changes and a full phase-in of what districts are owed.

NYSUT also defeated the proposal to allow for special education “mandate relief,” sometimes called special ed “flexibility,” which would have allowed some districts, essentially, to claim the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act does not apply to them.

Here are highlights included in the budget:

### School aid

An increase of \$1 billion in school aid, which includes an increase of \$700 million in Foundation Aid and fully funds expense-based aid.



PROVIDED

Whose schools? OUR schools!  
SenOMara-support public ed!  
#DeVosTATION @nysut.  
Tweet by Dora Leland, Horseheads TA.

### State revenue

A two-year extension of the millionaires’ tax.

### Professional development and teacher centers

Funding for teacher centers was restored and increased to a total of \$20 million; the Teachers of Tomorrow Program is maintained at last year’s level of \$25 million; the Mentor/Intern program is funded at \$2 million; and National Board Certification is funded at \$368,000.

### Community schools

The budget provides an increase of \$50 million for community schools through a set-aside in Foundation Aid to fund co-located or school-linked academic, health, mental health and personnel services, dual language programs, nutrition, counseling, legal services and other authorized support services. The budget also includes funding for three community school regional technical assistance centers.



PROVIDED

These educators are outside Senator Marty Golden’s office — saying no to #DeVosTation of our neighborhood public schools. Tweet by UFT.

### Special schools

The budget provides a \$2.3 million increase in funding to 4201 Schools; a capital fund of \$30 million to be shared by Special Acts, 4201, 853 and non-public schools; and money to help cover higher minimum wage costs for these schools.

### Higher education

Public higher education was one of the highest priorities in budget negotiations this year.

Higher ed leaders call the new state budget a “good first step,” and praised lawmakers for approving the governor’s Excelsior tuition scholarship plan to expand access, and a maintenance of effort for the state and city universities. Reinstatement of maintenance of effort provisions will provide campuses with annual funding for operating costs — at least as much as the year prior.

“Campuses are still reeling from drastic state aid cuts during the Great Recession, which is why the passage of the MOE is welcome and necessary,” said United University Professions

President Fred Kowal. “It will help campuses plan for the future.”

However, NYSUT and higher ed union leaders have said the governor’s affordability plan would be problematic unless it is linked to more state aid to support faculty and programs.



PROVIDED

Giving voice to public ed’s promise #devostation @AndyPallotta. Tweet by Viri Pettersen, president, Rockville Centre Teachers Association.

“Without increased public investment, Excelsior cannot achieve its full potential,” said Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress at CUNY. “The enacted state budget fails to provide the resources necessary to enable students to graduate on time.”

Funding for SUNY and CUNY remains relatively flat for next year, with some incremental increases tied to planned tuition increases. Community colleges tied to both universities got a modest boost of \$50 per full-time equivalent student.

### Excelsior

The budget allocates \$87 million for the Excelsior Scholarship Program with slightly modified eligibility standards. However, the program does provide students with funding to cover the cost of tuition at SUNY and CUNY four-year institutions and part-time scholarships for community colleges. In order to qualify for the program, students must enroll

in at least 12 credits per semester and complete at least 30 combined credits per year following the student start date.

The program will be phased in over three years, starting with eligibility guidelines of family income up to \$100,000 in 2017-18, \$110,000 in 2018-19 and \$125,000 in 2019-20. Students must live and work in New York State for a number of years (equal to the duration of the award received) within six months of receipt of his or her final award payment.

### SUNY hospitals

The budget restores \$9.3 million of the state subsidy for a total of \$78.3 million.

### Health Care Facility Transformation Program

The budget includes \$500 million to support health care facility transformation initiatives for capital projects, debt retirement, working capital or other

non-capital projects that facilitate health care transformation activities, including: mergers, consolidations, acquisitions or other activities intended to create financially sustainable systems of care or preserve or expand essential health care services.

### Union dues tax deduction

In a first step to counteracting attacks on union membership by right-to-work forces, the state budget authorizes the deduction of union dues from state income taxes. Early estimates indicate that this proposal will provide approximately \$35 million in additional tax refunds to union members statewide.

### Read more at nysut.org

To read the full initial state budget analysis prepared by the union’s legislative staff, visit [www.nysut.org/budget2017](http://www.nysut.org/budget2017).

## VOTE-COPE contributions top \$10 million mark

NYSUT members for the first time ever topped \$10 million in VOTE-COPE contributions last year, money that helps the union fend off the increasing number of intense anti-labor attacks.

NYSUT President Andy Pallotta called the record-breaking 2016 amount — \$10,101,097 — “a testament to the generosity and passion of members across the state.”

But to Jeff Zuckerman, a former longtime VOTE-COPE coordinator in Tarrytown and retiree services consultant who works tirelessly to raise funds across the state, the voluntary political action contributions represent something even deeper.

VOTE-COPE, he says, is “the lifeblood” of the union.

Each and every time Zuckerman prepares himself to give a speech on the need for VOTE-COPE funds, he watches the famous “Show Me the Money” clip



from the movie “Jerry Maguire,” starring Tom Cruise and Cuba Gooding Jr.

“My wife says I’m a maniac when it comes to VOTE COPE, and I am,” he said. “I get [super intense]

about VOTE-COPE when I think of the possibility of a constitutional convention and I think what could possibly happen. I think of my pension. I think of Triborough. I think of tenure. I think of so many things.”

Despite 2016’s record-breaking VOTE-COPE contribution total, Pallotta and Zuckerman emphasize the need to keep donations coming.

Consider: State Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan received \$11 million from the charter industry alone last election cycle — \$1 million more than the total VOTE-COPE funds raised last year.

**Want to make a contribution to VOTE-COPE?**

Contact your local president for all the details.

And so, as he does every year, Zuckerman implored delegates to NYSUT’s Representative Assembly to give to VOTE-COPE. They

reached deep into their pockets and donated \$16,500 on the spot.

Pallotta illustrated the power of VOTE-COPE with a story he told delegates regarding how members of the Mexico Academy and Central Schools Faculty Association “saw first-hand how political power pays off.”

Facing the closure of two power plants in the small Central New York community, the Mexico members teamed up with NYSUT and other unions to fight the pending shutdowns. In the end, they saved hundreds of jobs, spared the district the loss of critical tax revenue and ducked a devastating blow to the local economy. After seeing that, they dramatically increased individual VOTE-COPE contributions by more than 50 percent. Pallotta also shared the story of UFT retiree Carmela Gallucci, who was so motivated by Zuckerman’s pitch that she quadrupled her donation from \$25 to \$100 ... per MONTH!

# Campaign highlights parent rights

The billboards command attention with a simple message — “Parents: Know your rights to opt your children out of state tests.”

Yes, testing season is fully upon us again. NYSUT is using traditional and social media to support parents’ opt-out rights — in an illustration of the activist agenda established by the newly elected leadership team.

Billboards across the state include a link — [nysut.org/optout](http://nysut.org/optout) — to a new fact sheet for parents produced by NYSUT Research and Educational Services.

Placards at downstate bus stops and on street benches share the same message.

A NYSUT Facebook campaign at [www.facebook.com/nysutactioncenter](http://www.facebook.com/nysutactioncenter) states: “Let’s clear up some misinformation about the impact of opt outs” and also links to the parent information.

The fact sheet reviews federal

requirements for participation in the state assessments and potential consequences of opting out for districts, students and teachers.

Each year misinformation about the impact of opt outs is presented as fact to parents as school officials attempt to convince parents to have their children take the state tests.

The fact sheet is meant to help parents wade through the misinformation and know exactly what they need to do to exercise their option.

The next round of state tests begin the first week of May, with computer-based math tests scheduled May 1–8 and traditional math assessments for grades 3–8 on May 2–4.

“While the new chancellor and new members of the Board of Regents have taken steps to fix the problems with implementation of standards and tests, more changes are needed,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta.

“NYSUT fully supports the right of



- NYSUT billboards and signs reminding parents of their right to opt their children out of taking state tests light up Facebook and Twitter.

parents — and that includes NYSUT members — to choose what is best for their children. Our billboards, bus ads and social media campaign are all helping to spread the word.”



## NYSUT’s new leadership team coming to a town near you

NYSUT officers believe in member-driven activism — a commitment they are taking on the road.

Headed by President Andy Pallotta, NYSUT’s newly elected team of officers will travel across the state to meet with local leaders, members and staff to refine the union’s action agenda for the year ahead.

Pallotta said the officers look forward to visiting every area of the state — “wherever members are, we will be” — to talk about challenges facing the union and strategic planning.

Meanwhile, the union is moving forward on a host of initiatives that include electing NYSUT member Christine Pellegrino to the state Assembly and participating in a nationwide Day of Action May 1 on behalf of public education, Health Care Lobby Day May 9; and



EL-WISE NOISSETTE

- NYSUT’s newly elected slate of officers are, from left, First Vice President J. Philippe Abraham, Executive Vice President Jolene T. DiBrango, NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, Secretary-Treasurer Martin Messner and Second Vice President Paul Pecorale. Officers and members of the union’s Board of Directors were elected in April by more than 2,000 delegates to NYSUT’s Representative Assembly in New York City.

in-district lobby days May 18–19.

Working as a team, the officers emphasize member-driven unionism: “For

NYSUT to remain powerful for its members and the communities we serve, we must focus our energy, resources and

action on member service, member engagement and member mobilization,” Pallotta said.

The new slate makes history with the election of the first statewide officer ever to come from the ranks of the union’s higher education members — J. Philippe Abraham, former vice president for professionals at United University Professions.

UUP, which represents academic and professional faculty at SUNY, is NYSUT’s largest higher education affiliate. Higher education makes up nearly 20 percent of NYSUT’s membership, and includes the Professional Staff Congress at CUNY; community college members; and others at campuses across New York State.

The new team of officers is committed to what Pallotta describes as leadership forged at “a long table, with all points of view represented and respected.”

# President Andy Pallotta

**A**ndy Pallotta, an elementary teacher who hails from Brooklyn, is NYSUT's new president — but he is a familiar face to the union's activists.

As NYSUT executive vice president, Pallotta for the past seven years led NYSUT's political and legislative arm in a tenure marked by innovation and expansion of member activism.

"I believe in being relevant, resilient and, above all, relentless," Pallotta told delegates at NYSUT's Representative Assembly in April, where he was elected to a three-year term along with his slate of officers. "We will never quit fighting for those we serve, or for each other."

Under Pallotta's leadership, members' voluntary support for VOTE-COPE, the union's political action fund, has reached record highs. He oversaw creation of the NYSUT Member Action Center, affectionately known as the "MAC," that has expanded grassroots activism and accelerated the union's advocacy.

As president, he will continue to oversee NYSUT's legislative and political strategy, along with legal services and communications. "When I see NYSUT referred to as a force to be reckoned with, I know it is because of the tremendous engagement and fighting spirit of our members," he said.

Pallotta served 24 years as an elementary school teacher at PS 32 in the Bronx and three decades as a union activist. He is a proud product of New York City public schools, and a graduate of Kingsborough Community College, St. Francis College and Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.

He became a union representative early in his career, in a New York City district with 40,000 students and 57 union chapters. He worked to resolve contractual, educational and community issues in his role with the United Federation of Teachers.



EL-WISE NOISETTE

Pallotta is the first New York City educator to lead the state-wide federation of local unions in the 45 years since NYSUT was founded. He is also a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and the New York State AFL-CIO.



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Email: [andy@nysutmail.org](mailto:andy@nysutmail.org)

## A few words from NYSUT's new president

“We will continue to fight — for labor rights, for public education, for public higher education, for health care and for all workers.”

“The challenge is how to evolve the very nature of NYSUT itself so that it can thrive in a radically changed environment.”

“I believe in a ‘long table’ approach to leadership, with input from all of the smart and capable people who are a part of NYSUT.”

“I am proud of our advocacy and our proactive, powerful union. Proud: ... when we send 20,000 faxes to legislators in 24 hours. ... when 700 NYSUT members show up for Committee of 100 to lobby lawmakers. ... when we call for a picket with two days’ notice and hundreds of you show up.”

“We CAN survive these external threats, and I believe we will come out stronger and more agile.”

To read his full speech to RA delegates, visit [www.nysut.org/ra](http://www.nysut.org/ra).



RA delegates, above, elect Andy Pallotta and his slate of officers to lead NYSUT. Pallotta, right, mixes with delegates at the Member Benefits & Services on Display.



# Elections 2017

**A**lmost 2,000 delegates voted for candidates for NYSUT officers, at-large director positions, Election District director positions and AFT State Federation delegates and alternates. All representatives to the RA can cast a vote for all statewide offices, which reflects the membership represented at the RA. Election District vote totals represent those delegates and the membership from that geographic area.

Below are the total votes cast for each candidate.

The winner in contested races appears in bold.

Note that the ED 4 Director election resulted in a run-off vote. NYSUT's Elections Committee, chaired by Rod Sherman, Plattsburgh Teachers Association, conducted the election according to the NYSUT Campaign and Election Procedures.

The American Arbitration Association assisted with tabulating the ballots and certified the election results.

The roll call vote of each delegate is available at [www.nysut.org/election2017](http://www.nysut.org/election2017). You need your member ID number to log in to view the results. Misplaced it? Call Member Records at 518-213-6000, ext. 6224, or email [memberec@nysutmail.org](mailto:memberec@nysutmail.org).

## President

**Andrew Pallotta**  
255,356.0627  
Michael Lillis  
90,673.7738

## Executive Vice President

**Jolene DiBrango**  
247,856.8425  
Bianca Tanis  
94,339.2187

## First Vice President

**J. Philippe Abraham**  
244,455.4361  
Megan DeLaRosa  
98,441.0310

## Second Vice President

Paul Pecorale  
303,043.1747

## Secretary-Treasurer

**Martin Messner**  
251,302.1856  
Nate Hathaway  
90,263.4510

## At-large directors

ED 1&3  
Cherylyn Hughes  
262,711.9480

ED 2 & 44  
Joseph Cantafio  
263,423.7792

ED 4 & 46  
Rick Gallant  
259,975.5827

ED 5 & 6  
John Kozlowski  
261,380.9318

ED 7 & 8  
Phil Cleary  
94,410.0226

**Kevin Ahern**  
214,717.8868

ED 9 & 10  
Don Carlisto  
261,186.8609

ED 11-12-45  
Maria S. Pacheco  
258,331.0038

ED 13 & 14  
Raymond Hodges  
254,230.4195

ED 15 & 16  
**Pat Puleo**  
229,396.6497

Nate Morgan  
78,866.3725

ED 17 & 20  
Selina Durio  
259,311.5908

ED 18 & 19  
Edward R. Vasta  
257,613.1431

ED 21-22-23  
**Wayne White**  
231,835.2664  
Antoinette L. Blanck  
58,173.8983

ED 24 & 25  
Debra Penny  
254,738.3140

ED 26 & 27  
Howard Schoor  
254,119.4616

ED 28 & 29  
Carmen Alvarez-Scaglione  
254,859.5593

ED 30 & 31  
Thomas Brown  
254,617.1164

ED 32 & 33  
Janella T. Hinds  
255,176.3415

ED 34 & 35  
Sterling Roberson  
254,985.5411

ED 37-38-39  
Barbara Bowen  
265,425.5858

ED 40-41-42  
Frederick Kowal  
264,693.8941

ED 51-52-53  
Florence McCue  
254,828.9246

## Community College

Andrew Sako  
292,248.7734

**Health Care**  
Anne Goldman  
285,807.4327

**Higher Education**  
Michael Fabricant  
270,176.9887

**Higher Education**  
Pamela Malone  
277,370.8284

**Private Higher Ed**  
Stephen Rechner  
284,731.5426

**SRPs**  
**Shelvy Young Abrams**  
242,609.9989

**Sandie Carner-Shafran**  
239,075.4420

**Karen Lee Arthmann**  
226,423.7369

**Angie Rivera**  
225,662.8724

**Deborah J. Paulin**  
222,374.0373

Kim McEvoy  
76,917.4151  
Jo Ann Sweat  
71,443.4883  
Annie Herr McClintock  
49,078.1092

## Election District directors

ED 1  
**Peter Stuhlmiller**  
1,808.9998

John Mrozek  
1,008.0000

ED 2  
Adam Ziccardi  
1,190.3333  
Jeffrey Kuemmel  
409.0000

**Michelle Licht**  
3,579.6665

ED 3  
Joseph J. Najuch  
3,289.0002

ED 4\*  
Eric Talbot  
1,389.0000  
Shawn D. Howard  
1,019.0000  
Roger L. Pacos  
559.0000

\*ED 4 Run-off results:

**Eric Talbot**  
2,171.0000  
Shawn D. Howard  
796.0000

ED 5  
Adam Urbanski  
8,541.9997

ED 6  
Andrew Jordan  
7,269.3670

ED 7  
Michael Emmi  
8,405.0597

ED 8  
Andy Voigt  
4,764.6663

ED 9  
Jeanette M. Stapley  
3,919.6667

ED 10  
**Tony McCann**  
4,614.3001  
Seth B. Cohen  
4,147.2996

ED 11  
Joseph E. Herringshaw  
2,579.6000

ED 12  
Juliet C. Benaquisto  
1,775.0004  
**Stacey A. Caruso-Sharpe**  
1,832.9999

ED 13  
Arielle Chiger  
2,674.5870

**Kathleen M. Taylor**  
4,977.4126

ED 14  
**Sparrow Tobin**  
5,937.8088  
Jon Wedvik  
4,961.1901

ED 15  
Sean Kennedy  
7,646.1616

ED 16  
Jeff Yonkers  
6,136.1058

ED 17  
Tomia Smith  
5,762.0000

ED 18  
Barbara Hafner  
8,451.9995

ED 19  
Christine Vasilev  
7,063.6003

ED 20  
**John Mansfield**  
3,030.2500  
Richard Haase  
1,790.7501

ED 21  
Kevin W. Coyne  
4,479.0003

ED 22  
Nancy Sanders  
6,609.8005

ED 23  
Laura Spencer  
6,145.9996

ED 24  
Karen Alford  
124,763.4431

ED 25  
Dwayne Clark  
124,348.2769

ED 26  
Evelyn DeJesus  
124,763.4431

ED 27  
Rona Freiser  
124,555.8600

ED 28  
Arthur Pepper  
124,763.4431

ED 29  
Mary Atkinson  
124,555.8600

ED 30  
Anthony Harmon  
124,555.8600

ED 31  
Michael Mulgrew  
124,763.4431

ED 32  
Elizabeth Perez  
124,555.8600

ED 33  
Paul Egan  
124,763.4431

ED 34  
Richard Mantell  
124,348.2769

ED 35  
LeRoy Barr  
124,763.4431

ED 37  
Iris DeLutro  
25,543.9995

ED 38  
Steve London  
25,543.9995

ED 39  
Kevin Peterman  
6,298.6658

ED 40  
Jamie Dangler  
34,969.0967

ED 41  
Rowena Blackman-Stroud  
35,822.0015

ED 42  
Thomas Tucker  
33,689.7395

ED 44  
Phil Rumore  
4,824.7733

ED 45  
Paul Davis  
1,992.0001

ED 46  
Matt Hill  
2,142.0001

ED 51  
Loretta K. Donlon  
76.0000

ED 52  
Rosemary Catanzariti  
98.0000

ED 53  
Thomas V. Murphy  
285.5831

## AFT state delegates

**Paul Pecorale**  
264,502.4881

**Jolene DiBrango**  
240,555.4169

**J. Philippe Abraham**  
237,169.3893

**Joseph Cantafio**  
225,846.8921

AFT State Alternate #1  
**Megan DeLaRosa**  
98,286.0494

AFT State Alternate #2  
**Sandra Carner-Shafran**  
50,726.2298

AFT State Alternate #3  
**Viri Pettersen**  
42,269.0451

## Your NYSUT officers



### Executive Vice President Jolene T. DiBrango

Jolene T. DiBrango, who has 25 years of experience teaching all levels including college, oversees NYSUT's educational services department and governance matters.

A dynamic and respected union leader from the Rochester area, DiBrango has served many roles — from assistant building representative to president — in the 800-member Pittsford District Teachers' Association. She is a graduate of the NYSUT Leadership Institute and served on NYSUT's Annual Professional Performance Review workgroup.

She is known for her ability to mobilize members to actively engage locally, regionally, statewide and nationally. As one of three statewide in-service teacher trustees on the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board, DiBrango regularly conducted NYSUT pre-retirement workshops in locals across the state. DiBrango has worked closely with local retiree councils about how a possible New York State constitutional convention could have a devastating impact on our pension system.

A graduate of New Hartford High School, SUNY Oswego and Nazareth College, DiBrango holds teaching certificates in elementary education, reading and business education.



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Email: [jolene@nysutmail.org](mailto:jolene@nysutmail.org)



### Second Vice President Paul Pecorale

"The pep in my step has always been and will always continue to be the desire to work in the labor movement and to build on what we have to do to survive, to represent workers and to defend them," says Paul Pecorale.

Pecorale is serving his second three-year term as second vice president. A longtime special education teacher from Patchogue-Medford, Pecorale served eight years as president of the PM Congress of Teachers.

Pecorale oversees NYSUT Program Services, which assists retirees and School-Related Professionals and provides resources to members through Health and Safety, Health Care and Community Outreach programs. Pecorale is also serving as acting executive director to oversee field services and its 16 regional offices, as well as human resources.

NYSUT members hail from different backgrounds, and come to work as teachers, college academics and professionals, nurses, bus drivers, custodians, school health care professionals and many other titles. What they have in common, Pecorale says, is a career in helping students, patients and communities; careers that require ongoing professional development, necessary adjustment to changes in protocol and practice, and commitment and compassion. Belonging to a union, he says, "seeks to merge people through shared interests."



Follow on Twitter: [@PaulPecorale](https://twitter.com/PaulPecorale)  
Email: [paul@nysutmail.org](mailto:paul@nysutmail.org)



### First Vice President J. Philippe Abraham

"I'm all in." Philippe Abraham brings a broad spectrum of teaching and professional experience, coupled with union drive to his new role as NYSUT first vice president. He is NYSUT's first officer elected from a higher education local.

Abraham taught Spanish and French at middle school, high school and college — all in the Albany area — and then became an academic adviser at the University at Albany and a member of United University Professions, NYSUT's higher education affiliate that represents SUNY faculty and staff. He was promoted to director of career services, and then elected as a vice president for professionals for UUP, a position he held for six years.

"Education has been under attack nationally, and this is a good way to bring K-12 and higher education together," he says. "Some people see education as something for the privileged. It's a right. It's an equalizer. Ultimately, we are here to help New York residents better their lives through quality, affordable education."

Abraham oversees NYSUT's Member Benefits and the union's social justice outreach. "I am eager to begin working with the officers, the Board of Directors, staff and NYSUT's membership to continue educating the next generation of New Yorkers."



Follow on Twitter: [@nysut1stVP](https://twitter.com/nysut1stVP)  
Email: [philippe@nysutmail.org](mailto:philippe@nysutmail.org)



### Secretary-Treasurer Martin Messner

A health and physical education teacher for more than 10 years, Martin Messner knows a thing or two about endurance and is not afraid of hard work.

His influences? Family, community, public education and, of course, the labor movement.

Messner was first elected to statewide office in April 2014. He is past president of the Schoharie Teachers' Association and a graduate of the NYSUT and AFL-CIO Leadership Institutes. In 2012, he was honored with an American

Federation of Teachers Everyday Hero Award for his efforts to rebuild his community after Hurricane Irene.

He is also fond of social media — in its many iterations. He founded and served as president of the Foothills Area Council of Teachers, a consortium of nine Adirondack-area teacher unions. In that role, he led a local effort to use television ads and Facebook to spread a pro-public education/anti-corporate reform message to more than 1 million households.

In his first term as secretary-treasurer, Messner oversaw a significant reversal in the union's finances — going from record deficits and fiscal stress to restored reserves and the elimination of waste and redundancy. In his second term, Messner will continue to keep a watchful eye on NYSUT's finances so the union is in the best position possible to face challenges from those who seek to weaken labor.



Follow on Twitter: [@nysutTreasurer](https://twitter.com/nysutTreasurer)  
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# Testing, unfair teacher evals, plight of adjuncts, 'con con' threat

## RA delegates shape union's agenda, approve wide-ranging resolutions

With passion and persistence, delegates to NYSUT's policymaking convention in New York City directed the statewide union to stand strong against inappropriate student testing; unfair teacher evaluations; and the exploitation of adjunct faculty, among other priorities. Delegates also committed to defeat the state's proposed constitutional convention on the ballot this fall.

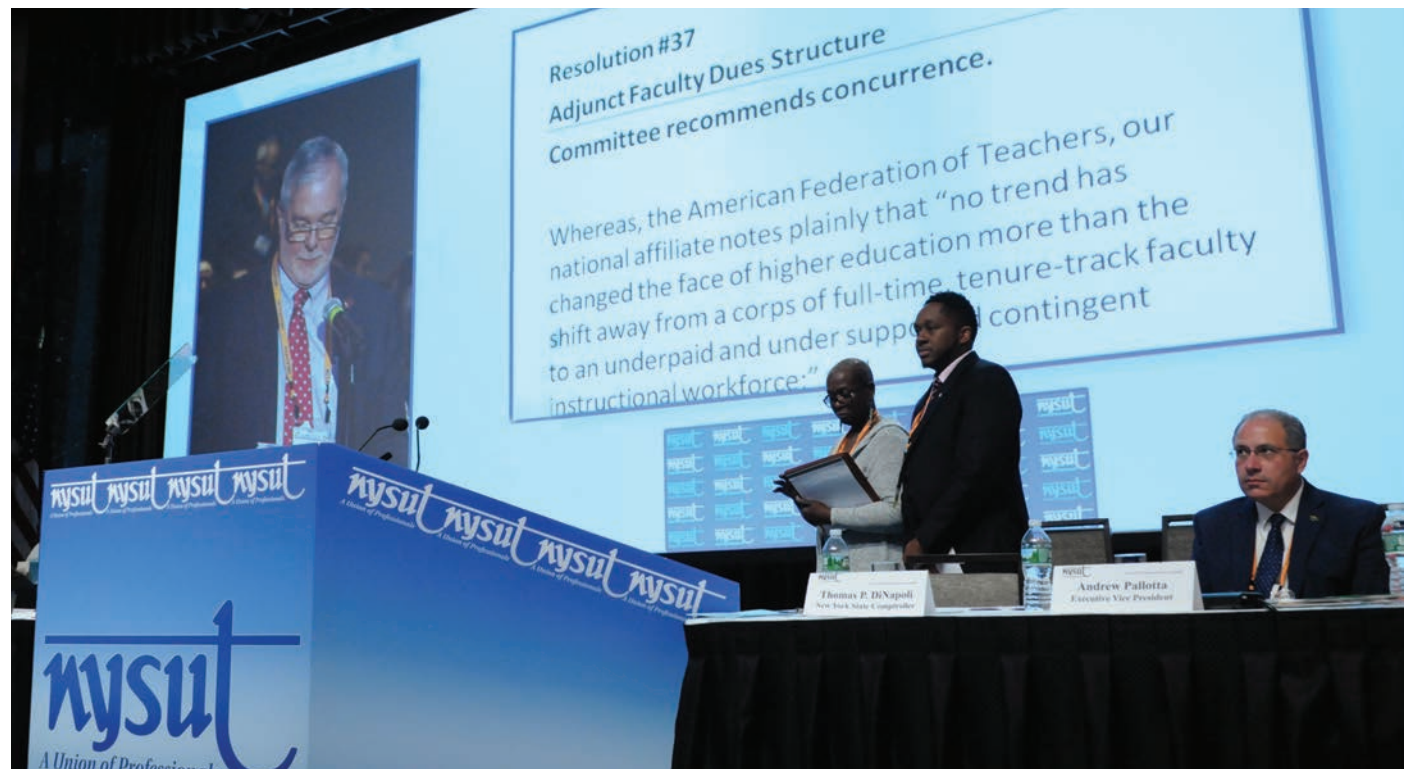
In all, more than 2,000 Representative Assembly delegates approved 35 resolutions and referred five measures to the NYSUT Board of Directors.

Delegates OK'd resolutions calling for student test scores to no longer be a mandatory part of teacher evaluations; condemning computer-based testing for grades 3-5; and opposing teacher participation in generating test questions for the state's ELA and math assessments in grades 3-8.

Delegates urged NYSUT to work diligently to get rid of the state's Annual Professional Performance Review system entirely, and return control to local school districts and teacher unions to develop sound evaluative tools.

They called for NYSUT to fight any punitive measures taken against a teacher whose final rating was based on mandatory standardized test scores. Another resolution asks NYSUT to consider forming a task force to recommend a more consistent timeline for administering state assessments.

As states wrestle with implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, delegates approved resolutions that



JONATHAN FICKIES

□ Kevin Peterman, president of the Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College and member of NYSUT's Board of Directors, shown on the screen, speaks in favor of a resolution creating a NYSUT task force to address the dues structure for adjunct members. Many adjuncts who work at several colleges and schools are unfairly forced to pay multiple dues for each campus, he says.

direct NYSUT to work with state policy-makers to leverage relief from punitive federal testing and accountability mandates. Delegates also voiced support for ESSA professional development funding to be used to expand teacher center programs. Delegates called for NYSUT to work with all national, state and local organizations to prevent U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos from any attempt to defund public schools.

Other educational issues resolutions call for more resources to help English language learners succeed; mandate labor history as part of the state's K-12 curriculum; support "consent" education in middle and high schools; and require a meaningful new teacher induction program. Delegates also want NYSUT to form a task force to make recommendations on establishing a consistent

regional school calendar for BOCES and local districts.

Several members spoke passionately about the importance of recess in elementary school, calling for at least 30 minutes a day, not counting physical education classes, for all elementary students. "Children need a lot of unstructured playtime and socialization," said Arielle Chiger of New Paltz TA. "This is the best early intervention we can offer."

## Higher education

Delegates made it loud and clear that a resolution seeking pay equity for contingent academic labor in higher education must be a top priority.

"I'm called an adjunct, but I work full-time with part-time pay," said Susan DiRaimo, Professional Staff Congress at CUNY. "I'm not contingent either

— teaching four courses every semester for (many) years."

Adjuncts now make up 60 to 70 percent of CUNY's instructional force, with many earning \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year and qualifying for public assistance, DiRaimo said. "Adjuncts deserve a living wage. It's really a moral question."

PSC's Mike Fabricant said adjuncts are working at multiple colleges and teaching as many as nine courses in a semester "in order to survive." He said the continued exploitation and impoverishment of the growing percentage of instructional staff is "a wound within public education" that must be taken care of. "It's fair, human and just," he said.

Jason DeTrani of Broome Community College Faculty Association noted the mistreatment of adjuncts goes well beyond low pay. "A hostile administration

can find many ways to penalize and attack adjuncts,” DeTrani said. “They can cut sections, double and triple enrollments ... you’re doing three times the work for the same terrible pay.”

He successfully amended the resolution to demand equity for adjuncts concerning “associated employment and loading” issues.

A Westchester CC Federation of Teachers member noted that the reliance on contingent faculty also directly hurts full-time faculty whose administrative workloads have increased dramatically.

In a separate resolution approved for adjuncts, Kevin Peterman of the Faculty Association of Suffolk CC spoke in favor of creating a NYSUT task force to address the dues structure that requires adjunct faculty to pay multiple dues at each college or school they work for.

“With 25 percent of adjuncts receiving public assistance, we need to do everything we can to help them,” said Peterman, whose union has more than 1,450 adjunct members. “Many of our members are also working at Stony Brook, Farmingdale and other places and paying dues to each of them, plus AFT.”

A number of delegates spoke passionately in favor of a resolution calling for all public colleges and schools to be declared sanctuary institutions, responding



■ Nivedita Majumdar of Professional Staff Congress, left, supports a resolution calling for all public colleges and schools to be designated sanctuary institutions for fearful immigrant students, faculty and staff. At right, Sayville TA’s Tim Southerton, a member of the NYS Teachers’ Retirement System Board, calls tier equity a core value for the union.

to President Trump’s actions to detain and deport undocumented residents and revoke protections for DACAs, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

“The level of anxiety for students, faculty and staff is remarkable,” said Dominic Wetzel of Kingsborough Community College, where about 70 percent of the students are immigrants. “Our students have mobilized, collecting 1,500 signatures to the college president to declare us a sanctuary campus,” the PSC member said. “This is a historic opportunity for NYSUT

members to show our students that we are there for them ... and so they can feel safe to pursue their education.”

The sanctuary resolution calls for NYSUT to support locals in demanding that their campuses and schools oppose surveillance of students, faculty and staff; and refuse to allow immigration officials into their buildings or supply information without warrants.



JONATHAN FICKIES

■ Pat Crispino, United Federation of Teachers, speaks in favor of a resolution urging union members to avoid travel to North Carolina, South Dakota and Kentucky, to protest anti-LGBTQ discriminatory laws.



JONATHAN FICKIES

Another higher ed resolution urges NYSUT’s opposition to any attempt to deny public funding to CUNY based on constitutionally protected speech or actions of its students, faculty and staff.

“Public funds should not be tied to political positions,” said PSC President Barbara Bowen. “That is a ban on free speech ... A blacklist,” she said.

Jackie DiSalvo of PSC likened the issue to McCarthyism, where college faculty members were purged for speaking out or voicing criticism.

“I don’t want to see us retreat to an earlier time,” said PSC’s Steve Leberstein. “There’s no place more important to uphold these failures of free speech than higher education institutions.”

## Special orders

Delegates approved several Special Orders of Business, including endorsement of Paul Farfaglia of Jordan Elbridge TA for re-election as one of three teacher-members on the NYS Teachers’ Retirement System Board.

Just hours after the Senate confirmed Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch, delegates approved a Special Order calling for local unions to pump up organizing campaigns and enlist current members to pledge to remain dues-paying union members even in the event of a negative Supreme Court decision.

Patty Bentley, a retiree from the United University Professions SUNY Plattsburgh chapter, spoke in favor of a Special Order calling for union members to avoid unnecessary travel to North Carolina, Kentucky and South Dakota to protest the states’ recent discriminatory actions against the LGBTQ community.

“We have to stand firm and send a message,” Bentley said, noting she is a Kentucky native and is saddened by what’s happening in the southern states.



EL-WISE NOISETTE

■ More than 2,000 delegates took action on resolutions that will guide the union’s advocacy in the coming year. Delegates make it loud and clear they want NYSUT to keep fighting for sane testing policies and more local control in establishing educational policy.

# Delegates reject constitutional amendments

**A**fter passionate debate, delegates to the NYSUT Representative Assembly rejected four proposed constitutional amendments that would have eliminated one of NYSUT's five officers and allowed regional voting for NYSUT Board members and statewide officers.

The proposed amendments called for:

- eliminating NYSUT's second vice president position;
- allowing regional Election District meetings so certified delegates could cast ballots without attending the RA;
- allowing special Election District meetings to fill all officer and director at-large vacancies as they occur, rather than having them filled by the NYSUT Board; and
- electing at-large directors by a majority of representatives of their respective constituencies, rather than by a statewide vote by delegates at the RA.

Nate Hathaway, president of Malone Federation of Teachers, spoke in favor

of the amendment to eliminate one statewide officer position to save money. "This organization is under economic stress. Given that, this would be a move in the right direction ... And save over \$350,000."

Mahopac Teachers Association Tom McMahon spoke against the idea, noting the officers devised a reorganization plan that will save three times more than eliminating a single officer position. "I don't think we should be asking our officers to do more with less," McMahon said. "Something will fall by the wayside."

In a voice vote, delegates confirmed the committee's recommendation to reject the amendment and keep all five statewide officers.

Michael Lillis, Lakeland FT spoke in favor of the second proposal, which called for regional voting for statewide officers and Board members, in addition to voting at the RA.

"Democracy should be the lifeblood

of this organization. We should do anything we can to expand participation," he said. Lillis noted a delegation from Buffalo was forced to drive to the RA in New York City because their flight was cancelled — just so they could vote for their statewide officers. Under the proposed amendment, the delegates could have voted at their regional office, Lillis said. But Pamela Malone of United University Professions said allowing regional voting would diminish RA attendance. "These RAs are an opportunity to network, promote solidarity," she said. "As a higher education member, I rely on these to learn about my brothers and sisters in K-12."

A voice vote was too close to call, so delegates were asked to stand and be counted. The amendment went down by 284 votes.

Regarding the third proposed amendment, Alan Trevithick of Westchester CC FT made the case that NYSUT's legislative program calls for early voting and

other measures to promote the "sacred right" to vote in general elections.

"This amendment would promote stronger participation in NYSUT," he said. "You'll be voting for real inclusion and real unity." Others argued that allowing regional voting would add costs and be difficult for retiree representation. The measure also failed.

On the final proposed amendment, Rob Ciani of Commack TA said allowing representatives to be elected by their respective constituencies would eliminate frustration and anger by those who believe that a statewide vote is unfair. "It's a healing for brothers and sisters who feel their voice has been lost," he said. "It would empower so many locals across New York State."

Sandie Carner-Shafran, an SRP member of the NYSUT Board, noted the importance of NYSUT's many constituencies — SRPs, retirees, health care and higher education — to be elected on a statewide basis. "We should be expanding their representation, not limiting it."

# Magee, Fortino recognized for their valuable service

**R**einforcing their tributes with sustained standing ovations, delegates unanimously approved heartfelt Special Orders of Business honoring outgoing officers Karen E. Magee and Catalina Fortino for their lifelong commitment to unionism and public education.

Magee was praised in a special resolution for her leadership in establishing NYSUT as "the voice that cannot be ignored" and re-engaging NYSUT members to "BE the union" through increased activism.

The recognition followed Magee's address to delegates emphasizing the importance of "solidarity forever."

In the resolution, delegates lauded Magee's initiative in launching the union's first-ever conference dedicated to women's priorities — "a resounding success" that drew capacity participation earlier this year. Delegates subsequently voted to establish a standing



PHOTOS: EL-WISE NOISETTE

■ Outgoing NYSUT officers Karen E. Magee, left, and Catalina Fortino, above left, with Roberta Elins of United College Employees of FIT, are honored by delegates.

NYSUT committee on women's priorities.

Magee, who was elected as the union's first woman president in 2014, has been tapped to lead a new labor initiative advancing economic opportunities for women.

Her career includes service as president of the Harrison TA, as a NYS Teachers' Retirement System

representative, and a NYSUT Board member.

In a special resolution, delegates recognized Fortino for serving her union "at the local, state and national level with the utmost dedication and integrity, advocating strongly and effectively for her students, her colleagues and the teaching profession from pre-K through

post-graduate." The resolution noted Fortino's tireless advocacy for English language learners and students with disabilities, and her reputation as a nationally recognized expert on professional development, curriculum and assessments.

Fortino's leadership on higher education issues also earned kudos, with delegates recognizing her expertise and sensitivity in collaborating with her colleagues and advancing concerns on behalf of higher ed members. Fortino is retiring after a union career that included service as a NYSUT officer, director of the UFT Teacher Center and UFT vice president.

Video tributes unveiled at the RA include the highlights of each woman's union career and tributes from colleagues and dignitaries who discuss their legacies. To watch the videos and to read the Special Orders of Business, visit [www.nysut.org/ra](http://www.nysut.org/ra).

# 'Con con' would cost NYers a lot more than money

*This is the seventh in a series about key reasons why an upcoming referendum to hold a state constitutional convention must be defeated. The series examines topics — collective bargaining, public pensions, forever wild provisions, public education and social welfare obligations — that would be at risk if a state constitutional convention was held.*

**S**eventy-one percent of likely voters in New York State still know nothing about the critical ballot question they will be asked in November, according to recent polling. And, time is winding down.

This Election Day — Nov. 7 — just about six months from now, voters will decide whether New York State should redraft its constitution.

Should the referendum pass, citizens could feel far-reaching adverse effects for decades:

- critical funding stripped from public schools;
- permanent loss of vital public employee pension protections;
- workers denied collective bargaining rights and the right to join a union;
- decimation of environmental regulations.

That's why union leaders are working earnestly to educate NYSUT members and the public.

Stopping a so-called "con con" was an urgent topic among delegates to last month's NYSUT Representative Assembly and local and retiree council presidents attending their pre-RA conference. The union knows it has its work cut out.

"While NYSUT members are slightly more informed than the general public ... our numbers are nothing to get excited about," NYSUT Polling Center Manager Nicki Richardson told local and retiree leaders during a conference session.

NYSUT's work in opposition to the convention has been effective, thus far. Since the union began messaging on the issue, support for a convention has dropped 14 points — and among union households, support has fallen particularly fast, Richardson said.

NYSUT needs its members to spread the word about the "con con" — and fast — in their communities and among their friends and families.

The one message that resonates more than others?

A constitutional convention would be



■ NYSUT Board member Sandie Carner-Shafran at the RA's Political Action Center.

a BIG waste of taxpayer money. Though estimates run the gamut, it is safe to say hundreds of millions would be spent to pay more than 200 political insiders and an untold number of consultants. They would be reimbursed for expenses and paid a salary equivalent to a state Assembly member — \$79,500 — whether the convention takes 60 minutes or six months (the convention has no time limit).

And, consider: sitting lawmakers, both state and local, are likely to be convention delegates, so they get to double dip into the state payroll.

Without a doubt, the prospect of a constitutional convention has created

some strange bedfellows — thrusting progressive and conservative groups together in opposition to the proposal while some 'good government' groups support the idea, claiming a "con con" is needed to bring "ethics reform."

Baloney, union leaders say.

The fact is, matters such as ethics reform and other legislative changes can be made — and have been made — through the amendment process, said NYSUT Senior Legislative Representative Peter Savage.

What's more, unlike a constitutional convention, the amendment process doesn't cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

"It costs nothing at all," he said.

## What you need to know

Learn more about the perils of a constitutional convention and what you can do to educate yourself and others. Visit:  
[www.nonewyorkconvention.org](http://www.nonewyorkconvention.org)  
[www.nysut.org/concon](http://www.nysut.org/concon)

# Retiree postcard campaign highlights 'con con' risks

By Kara Smith  
 ksmith@nysutmail.org

**W**ith a Nov. 7 constitutional convention vote on the horizon, NYSUT retirees are putting pen to paper this spring to educate members about its dangers.

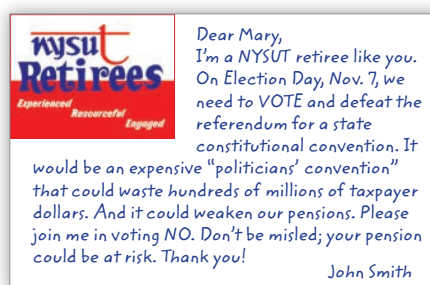
Leaders will set aside time at retiree council gatherings statewide so attendees can write pre-addressed and stamped postcards detailing the risks of holding a constitutional convention and asking fellow retirees to vote no. The initiative is spearheaded by NYSUT's Retiree Services Department and the

union's network of retiree council leaders and consultants.

"Getting a handwritten note from another NYSUT member makes you more likely to respond and act," said NYSUT Second Vice President Paul Pecorale, noting that the campaign mirrors earlier successful efforts by the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association.

The member-to-member postcard campaign began after research showed that many retirees think their pension benefits are protected from future change — a dangerous misconception.

"Spreading the word that a constitutional convention puts retiree pensions



at risk is a top priority," said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta, who explained that having retirees speak directly to other retirees is the most effective means of reaching them.

Set to launch in early May and run through Nov. 7, the campaign will initially include mailing 200 postcards to likely

retiree voters in each of NYSUT's 45 retiree councils. Writers can select one of five sample messages or pen a customized message of their own. Leaders expect to send out nearly 25,000 postcards before the November vote.

New York State voters are asked every 20 years whether to hold a convention to alter the state constitution. Experts estimate a convention could cost hundreds of millions of dollars and open important rights to wholesale change, including pension and environmental protections, the right to bargain collectively and the social safety net. Retirees are particularly at risk since most rely on their pensions for living expenses.



PHOTOS BY: EL-WISE NOISETTE

From left, Nancy Sullivan, Andy Sako, Alma Cormican, Stewart Cohen, Dawn Lloyd-Mathews and Eileen Landy.



[www.nysut.org/RA](http://www.nysut.org/RA)  
 Watch videos about the honorees and all the award winners.



## 2017 Constituency Awards

NYSUT recognizes individual members for excellence in leadership, union activism and outstanding commitment to their professions at the union's annual Representative Assembly.

### Higher education member of the year

**Eileen Landy**, an associate professor of sociology at SUNY Old Westbury, has served nearly 14 years as secretary-treasurer of United University Professions, NYSUT's largest higher ed affiliate and the statewide union that represents academic and professional staff on State University of New York campuses.

She was previously president of UUP's Old Westbury chapter and presiding officer of the Old Westbury Faculty Senate, and has served as a delegate to and a member of numerous conventions and committees of NYSUT, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the Coalition of Labor Union Women. Landy also has been an instrumental voice in the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education.

Landy is a frequent and vocal presence on picket lines and at rallies and is a recognized champion for women's issues.

### Retiree member of the year

**Stewart Cohen** is, in the words of United Federation of Teachers Retired Teachers Chapter leader Tom Murphy, "the UFT/NYSUT's most valued political activist on the west coast of Florida."

Since retiring to Sarasota in 2003, Cohen serves as a UFT delegate to the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans, representing FLARA on the West Central Florida Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO and chairing its board of trustees.

Cohen is also a regular participant in Sarasota and Manatee Democratic Party actions as a labor advocate. In the last election cycle alone, his network of 57 activists held seven home phone banks, making 3,000 calls and sending 1,500 emails. He has a waiting list of eager volunteers.

"I look forward to increasing our impact on the west coast of Florida for the next election cycle," Cohen says.

### Higher education member of the year

**Andy Sako** is a professor of building management at Erie Community College. Sako has been president of the Faculty Federation of Erie Community College since 2004. He is also a member of NYSUT's Board of Directors and of the NEA Board of Directors, representing New York State.

In his academic work, he is known for establishing creative partnerships with the building trades in Erie County that benefit his students. In 2000, Sako won the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, the highest honor accorded a faculty member or administrator by the State University of New York. The award recognizes the professional excellence, accomplishments and outstanding contributions of SUNY's dedicated professionals.

Sako is also a recognized political force in the Buffalo area, respected by policymakers of all party affiliations.

### Retiree member of the year

Westchester/Putnam retiree member **Alma Cormican** epitomizes the qualities that make NYSUT a strong union. The past president and chief negotiator for the White Plains Teachers Association, Cormican remained a union activist after retiring in 1999. She joined her retiree local's executive committee in 2004 and was elected president in 2008.

Cormican has edited her retiree local's award-winning newsletter since 2006; organized and run pre-retirement seminars for in-service teachers since 2009; and raised more than \$15,000 for local scholarships and the Westchester/Putnam Retiree's REACT committee that helps schools and children in need.

Cormican has attended the NYSUT Representative Assembly since 1972. She is an active member of the statewide union's Retiree Advisory Committee, where she contributed to the publication *Your Blueprint for a Successful Retirement: An online planning guide*.

### Health care professional member of the year

Social worker **Dawn Lloyd-Mathews**, an 18-year member of the Sayville Teachers Association, works with at-risk middle school students referred for social, emotional and/or behavioral reasons. She provides individual, group and family crisis intervention; coordinates community outreach programs; and assists children and families on matters dealing with abuse, neglect and homelessness.

Her work in addressing cyber-bullying has been called "pioneering" by district officials, and she has been a featured speaker on the issue at numerous national conferences.

Lloyd-Mathews has served in several key leadership roles with the STA, including executive vice president, grievance coordinator and member of the union's negotiating team. She is also a delegate to NYSUT and the American Federation of Teachers.

A member of the National Association of School Social Workers and the New York State School Social Workers Association, Lloyd-Mathews also has worked in the classroom, lecturing on social networking behavior, the Dignity for All Students Act, relationships and suicide prevention. She also has served as a coach in basketball and lacrosse.

### SRP member of the year

**Nancy Sullivan**, a teaching assistant and member of the West Hempstead Educational Association, works with K-12 students with special needs. She also serves as a union building representative for the West Hempstead Middle School.

When Sullivan began working in the West Hempstead district 18 years ago, teaching assistants did not have union representation. She initiated efforts to bring teaching assistants under the union umbrella, collaborated with her colleagues to educate the district and pushed for union affiliation.

Sullivan has earned a reputation for going above and beyond for her students. "She is always professional and prepared no matter what content area or grade level she is assigned. And, she empowers students with her positivity, making her a true role model," said West Hempstead EA President Barbara Hafner.

## Lubin awarded union's highest honor

**Alan Lubin** — whose work fighting for public education, civil rights and working people has spanned a half century — received NYSUT's highest honor: the Albert Shanker Award for Distinguished Service.

"Albert Shanker taught me everything, including the skill of listening," said Lubin, speaking to the more than 2,000 delegates attending the 2017 NYSUT Representative Assembly. "He used to throw out outrageous ideas and then he'd sit down and listen as they were transformed into debates and arguments."

A former fourth-grade teacher from Brooklyn, Lubin served for decades in leadership roles in both the United Federation of Teachers and NYSUT, and spent 17 years as NYSUT's executive vice president and head of the union's legislative and political action operations. In 2015, he was named NYSUT's executive vice president emeritus.

His work helped establish NYSUT as one of the most powerful forces in the state and his leadership helped secure numerous victories for members, including protecting public employees' pensions from inflation through enactment of a Cost-of-Living Adjustment; winning record school aid increases; and gaining passage of legislation that requires schools to be



equipped with automated external defibrillators — a move credited with saving dozens of lives in schools and on athletic fields across the state.

Lubin was a young teacher and unionist in New York City when Shanker — the legendary UFT and AFT leader who pioneered a militant brand of teacher unionism — invited him to participate in meetings with other leading labor figures of the time.

"Picture this: a chubby kid from Brooklyn sitting in a room with Al Shanker, Bayard Rustin, A. Phillip Randolph, Norman Hill," Lubin said. "Those meetings were the genesis of my saying: If you are doing this alone, you are doing it wrong."

## Basko lauded for her grit, commitment

**Sonia Basko** was honored posthumously with "Not for Ourselves Alone:" The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award during the opening session of NYSUT's Representative Assembly.

A teacher, former president of the Penfield Education Association, NYSUT Board member and then special projects coordinator on NYSUT's staff, Sonia enlivened unionism, empowered members, initiated campaigns for social justice and organized spirited rallies.

"She knew that change would be more far-reaching when we advocated for people to speak for themselves," said Alexandra Basko, Sonia's sister.

In a powerful video tribute, Kate Sacco of the Kenmore Teachers Association said Sonia had a knack for finding people and bringing them to leadership roles. "Sonia was never too busy," said John Kozlowski, president of the Monroe County Federation of Teachers, where Sonia had served as vice president.

As Alexandra Basko accepted the NFOA award on her late sister's behalf, delegates from around the state rose in a standing ovation. She thanked her mother, Kathy, an



■ Above, Alexandra Basko, left, and her mom, Kathy.

■ Left, Sonia Basko



immigrant, for passing on her feminine strength.

Sonia served as NYSUT staff liaison to the American Cancer

Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. She died in December of complications from cancer at the age of 43. Sandra Feldman, former UFT and then AFT president for whom the award is named, also died of cancer.

The NFOA award is presented to someone who has a history of "activism, selfless service and commitment to our union," said outgoing NYSUT Vice President Catalina Fortino.

"Sonia was just irreplaceable," said Kozlowski, eyes rimming with tears.

## 2017 Teacher of the year

**Amy Hysick**, the 2017 New York State Teacher of the Year, encouraged delegates to the NYSUT Representative Assembly to continue to "elevate the teaching profession and fight for equity in our schools.

"I am proud to be a member of a union that supports us in our autonomy and encourages us to develop as individual professionals," said Hysick, a Cicero-North Syracuse High School science teacher whose parents are NYSUT retirees and former teachers in the same district.

Hysick, a member of the North Syracuse Education Association, is passionate about her profession and supports new teachers through mentoring, because she remembers how difficult it is to be a new teacher.

Through constant adjustment of her teaching strategies, she embraces student individuality because, "Not everyone travels the same path, walks at the same speed or reaches the destination at the same time," she told delegates.



Hysick called watching the video of her classroom work "surreal," and confessed that her favorite parts of a movie are often the outtakes so the audience sees how many times it takes to make one perfect "take."

"My behind-the-scenes story is one of exploration and experimenting with different teaching strategies — but not all of them work

the first time out of the gate," Hysick said. "But there are hidden lessons for my students embedded in these experiences:

- Making mistakes is OK, and it's part of how we learn.
- If you never stretch yourself and try anything new, you will never grow.
- Failure is not the end of the world.
- There is always a path to success, and GPS directions are available if you make a wrong turn.
- Learning doesn't really 'end' — our journeys of discovery continue for the rest of our lives.
- We learn best when we learn together.

"Our students and our schools need strong advocates more than ever. We each have unique approaches to teaching, different passions in education — but our voices and our actions will carry more weight and grow in volume when we band together."

## Dein receives Feldman leadership grant



**Kathryn Dein**, an AIS math teacher and local president of the North Babylon Teachers Organization, received the Sandy Feldman Leadership Grant.

Each year, NYSUT awards a grant of \$2,000 to help up-and-coming women activists develop leadership skills, network with other union leaders and build union and community involvement.

Dein has been working with a union action committee, the Parent Youth Activity Center and local civic organizations to create community events. She wants to attend leadership programs and take part in coalition-building training.



## Dignitaries address delegates



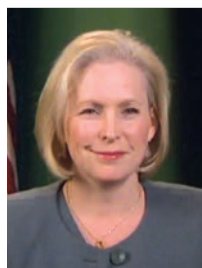
Weingarten



Cilento



Eskelsen



Gillibrand



DiNapoli

More than 2,000 delegates heard messages of union strength and motivation from a variety of speakers: American Federation of

Teachers President Randi Weingarten, NYS AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento, State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli and video messages from National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen Garcia and U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand. To read more or to watch the videos, visit [www.nysut.org/ra](http://www.nysut.org/ra).

## Political action at its best

First-time awards were given to NYSUT members who go above and beyond to help make campaigns across the state effective and successful. These volunteers, for example, make thousands of calls to support various candidates, advocate at the Capitol, attend rallies and canvas neighborhoods.

Twenty NYSUT members received the inaugural Political Action Volunteer Recognition Award this year. For the full list of winners, visit [www.nysut.org/ra](http://www.nysut.org/ra).

## 'We are united' at LIU



ANDREW WATSON

Months after Long Island University faculty were locked out over a contract dispute and more than a year of negotiations later, LIU Brooklyn Faculty Federation President Jessica Rosenberg said glimmers of hope are emerging at the bargaining table. "This has been a brutal season for LIU faculty," she told about 150 activists at an April rally. "There is only movement at the table because we are united. Stay with us." For more about the LIU rally, visit [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

## Bags for justice



ANDREW WATSON

High school students in Monticello are getting a real taste of what social justice — and unionism — means. Their Youth Economic Group, an initiative started in Sullivan County by the Rural & Migrant Ministry as a way to address the lack of jobs and fair pay in the largely rural area, became NYSUT's first-ever student-member group this spring. YEG spawned a program called "Bags for Justice," which enables kids to earn money while learning about social justice issues. The students sponsored their own booth at the RA where they sold American-made bags and T-shirts. Read more at [www.nysut.org/ra](http://www.nysut.org/ra).

## Social justice awards

A first-time NYSUT award recognized members of 14 locals for their work on social justice issues and human rights. The Ken Kurzweil Social Justice Recognition Award was created at the 2016 NYSUT RA to honor the longtime activist from the Bedford TA and member of NYSUT's Civil and Human Rights Committee.



BECKY MILLER

"Social justice is union work," Kurzweil told RA delegates. He said it has been an honor "working with beautiful people who want to make the world a little more just."

For the complete list of winners and their work, visit [www.nysut.org/ra](http://www.nysut.org/ra).

## 'Cracker barrel'

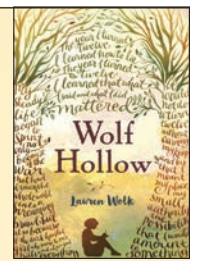


EL-WISE NOISSETTE

Rochester TA President Adam Urbanski, above, praises NYSUT officers during the Officers Dialogue, or "cracker barrel" session, held at the pre-RA Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference, for spurring activism during the last year. To read the full story and others about the conference, visit [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org) and click on "More news" under the "The Latest."

## Wolf Hollow

BY LAUREN WOLK



**Recommended by:** Rebecca Ekstrom, School Library Media Specialist, Algonquin Middle School, Averill Park Teacher's Association

**Suitable for:** grades 5–8.

**Why I chose it:** Once in a while a book comes along that is important on so many levels. This is one such book. The novel, which takes place in 1943, brings with it many connections to present day because its themes are universal and timeless. A dark, historical fiction novel that deftly deals with bullying, war, injustice, prejudice, mental illness, moral dilemmas and socio-economic status, the book was inspired by Wolk's mother's simple childhood growing up in rural western Pennsylvania. It is one of three books awarded the John Newbery Medal for 2017.

**What I like best:** Throughout the book, protagonist Annabelle learns hard truths about life: Sometimes lying is necessary to shelter those who need protection; and, at times, bullies get away with evil deeds. Readers will learn along with Annabelle that situations can be complex, not black and white, and secrets must be kept in order to execute a complex plan. Wolk has created a complex character in Annabelle, who is a role model for anyone who feels afraid or too small to speak out against injustice. She reaches out in surprising ways — even to the bully — when most of us would not.

**How teachers can use this book:** *Wolf Hollow* would be great for those students not yet ready for the length and more challenging reading level of Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*. It would make an excellent book integrated into ELA or literacy curriculum, or read by a book club because there is much to debate and discuss.

**About the author:** Wolk is an author and poet, and the associate director at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod. At the start of her career, she spent a year as a writer with the Battered Women's Project of the St. Paul American Indian Center, and then worked as both an editor and an English teacher. She is also the author of *Beyond the Bright Sea* and *Those Who Favor Fire*. Visit [www.laurenwolk.com](http://www.laurenwolk.com).

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

# Elia: Mistakes in the past will not be repeated

In a frank and freewheeling discussion that touched on everything from frightening federal budget proposals to the future of teacher evaluations, State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia assured local union leaders their voices are valued, and this time, upcoming policy changes for standards, curriculum, assessments and teacher evaluation will not be rushed through.

Appearing for the first time at NYSUT's pre-RA Local and Retiree Council Presidents Conference, Elia said she was seriously concerned about developments unfolding in Washington that could cost New York State more than \$350 million in funding for students who are most in need.

"I don't think we should be choosing between guns and children," she said, referring to President Trump's proposed budget that beefs up the military yet recommends devastating cuts in education funding. She said the president's so-called "skinny budget" would seriously jeopardize programs that serve the state's neediest students and support teacher preparation, professional development, after-school programs, English language learners and students with disabilities.

"It's important for us all to be proactive," she said, adding that federal discussion around school choice initiatives is "uninformed" and clearly not research-based.

After attending a recent meeting of chief state school officers with U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Elia said New York State is moving forward with the understanding that states will have more power to implement standards, curriculum, assessments and teacher evaluation systems with less federal oversight.

"That might be a good thing for us," she said.

She outlined changes underway for the State Education Department and Board of Regents to review and revise standards, curriculum, assessments and teacher evaluations.

Elia, who became education



PHOTOS: EL-WISE NOISETTE

State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia says teachers should not be forced to use scripted lesson plans.

commissioner in 2015, vowed not to repeat the mistakes of the past when policy changes were rushed through, or without teacher input.

She emphasized the only way to move forward successfully is to make sure everyone truly has a voice in the changes. She received big applause when she denounced districts that have insisted teachers follow Engage New York scripted lesson plans. "You shouldn't expect teachers — who are professionals — to have a script," she said. "Doctors aren't given a script. Lawyers aren't given a script."

During the Q&A portion, local leaders repeatedly voiced concerns about lifting time restrictions for grade 3–8 English language arts and math tests. West Irondequoit TA's Scott Steinberg and Lakeland FT's Mike Lillis said some students taking the recent ELA exam spent more than five hours a day on the three-day exams.

"I'm afraid there's serious abuse being done to students," Lillis said, questioning whether schools are violating the state's law that testing cannot exceed more than 1 percent of a student's school year.

"I plead with you to reconsider the idea of unlimited time," said Utica TA's Cherie Grant. "Four of my students were

head-banging on their desks. Unlimited time only exacerbates the distress our students feel."

Elia, who implemented the new policy to take some of the stress off students who felt they didn't have enough time on the tests, said she will look further into the issue.

Peter House of Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES EA poignantly explained how heartbreaking it is for him to force his special education students to take grade-level state exams. When one of his students, who is on a first- or second-grade math level, was handed a seventh-grade test, the student was reduced to "hitting his head with a calculator saying, 'I'm stupid,'" House said.

"I don't think that's acceptable," Elia said. She said SED continues to seek a federal waiver for grade-level testing for students with disabilities and English language learners. "That will be part of the ESSA plan we submit," she said.

On teacher evaluation, Elia pledged a "thoughtful, respectful, deliberative and collaborative" revamp, after a standardized test-based evaluation system was

temporarily "unplugged" from a misguided state law.

Extending that metaphor, Saranac Lake TA co-president Don Carlisto, a NYSUT Board member, warned Elia that if standardized tests are still tied to teacher evaluations "when we plug back in, many are going to blow their fuse."

Elia said her goal is to make evaluations productive, not punitive. Student learning can be measured in multiple ways, she said.

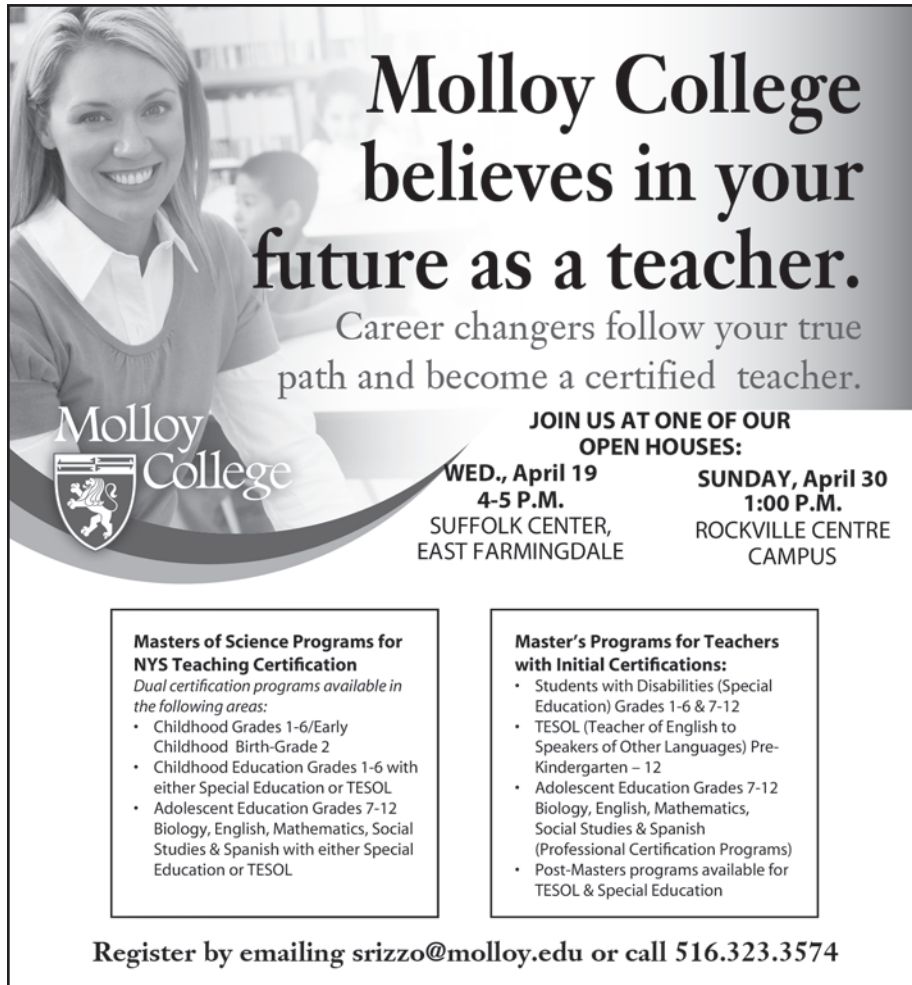
Beverly Voos, Retiree Council 6, urged Elia to add another priority: encouraging students to enter the teaching profession.

"I am worried about the future of our profession," she said, noting teacher education program enrollments are plummeting.

"I totally agree with you," Elia said. "Forces have been beating up on teachers for the last 15 years and we have to counterbalance that ... We have to change the environment so teachers feel supported ... and people understand teaching is more important than any other profession."



Local leaders line up to ask State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia questions. Utica TA President Cherie Grant, at microphone, voices frustration over using standardized tests to show student growth for teacher evaluations. "I have not grown anything but angrier and sad," she says.



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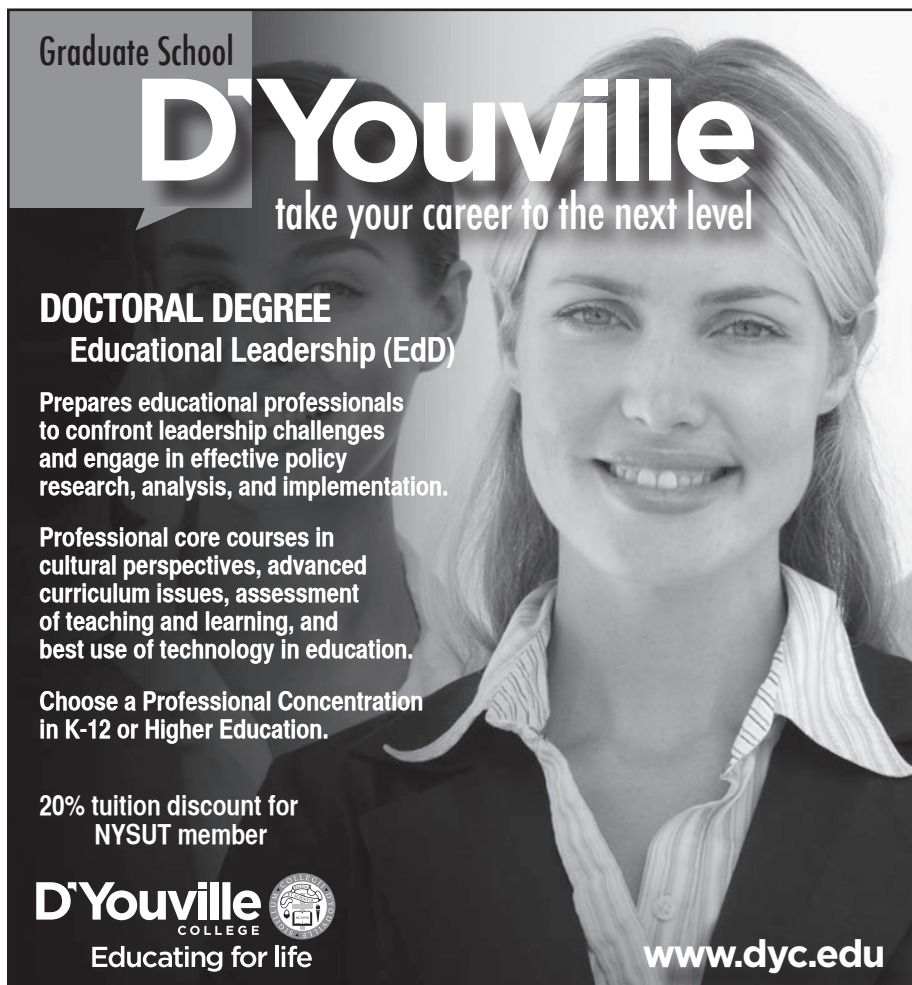
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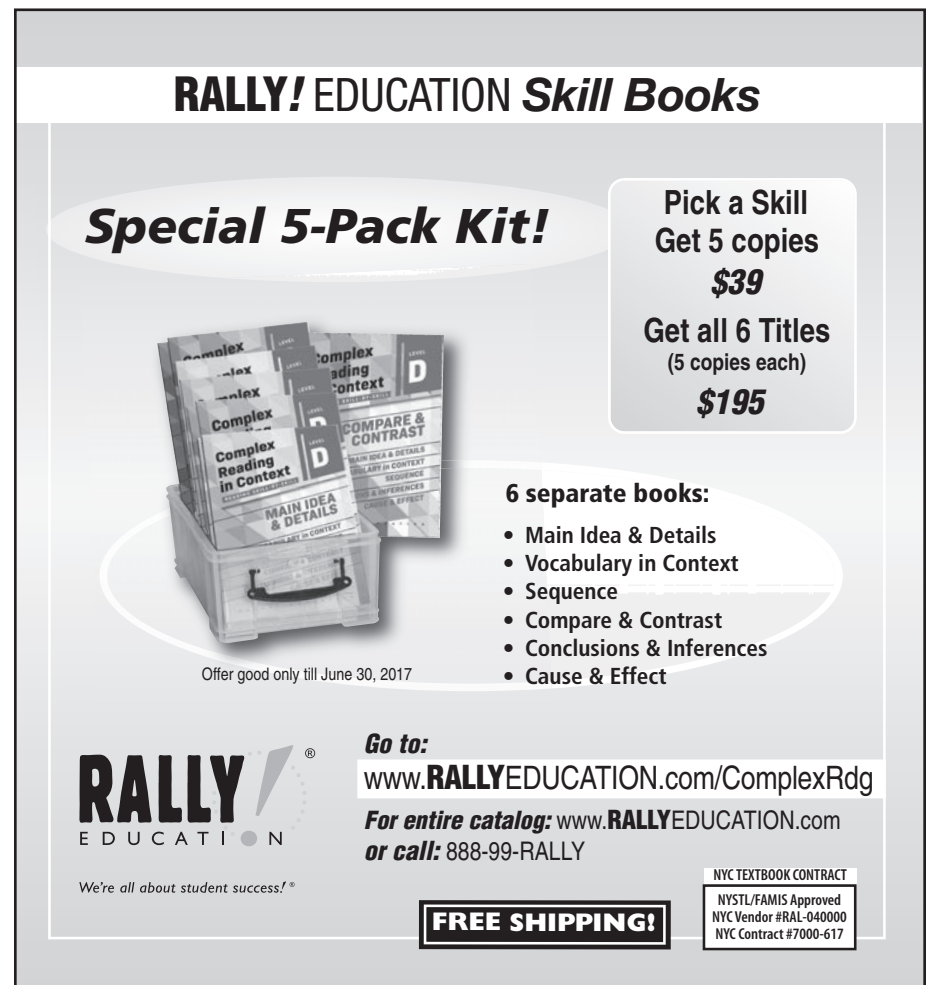
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## COMING UP

**May 2**

LGBTQ Lobby Day, state Capitol, Albany

**May 6-12**

National Nurses Week, visit [www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org) for a toolkit full of resources.

**May 7-12**

National Teacher Appreciation Week, visit [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org) for resources and ideas.

**May 9**

National Teacher Day, thank a teacher at [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

**May 9**

Health Care Lobby Day, state Capitol, Albany

**May 16**

Statewide school budget and board voting.

**May 19-20**

Board of Directors meeting, NYSUT headquarters, Latham

## We heard you

This issue of *NYSUT United* uses a higher quality paper for the cover and features the publication's original flag. The changes were made in response to the thoughtful feedback we received from members. Thank you.



Anna Marriott is a middle school health teacher and co-director of the Waterloo Teacher Resource Center.

**1. You are in your 12th year as a health educator, and have been active in your union as secretary. This year you were a delegate to the NYSUT 2017 Representative Assembly for the first time. What motivates you?**

In recent years it seems that public schools and educators are under attack in many ways — from defunding public schools to student assessments that are not developmentally appropriate. I felt it was important to become more involved in the political process of NYSUT. This convention gave me a chance to hear the issues upfront and be able to voice those issues back at my local. We all get magazines and emails, but there is nothing to replace a face-to-face conversation with your local union members about the issues we face with our public schools and our profession.

measures of reading and writing skills than other deaf children.

Even though deaf children of deaf parents may not use spoken English on a daily basis, research shows there are advantages in English literacy development of having deaf parents.

Because deaf children can

## 5 QUESTIONS FOR ... **Anna Marriott** Waterloo Education Association

### 2. What inspired you the most about the RA?

Knowing that we (as a WEA member and NYSUT member) have a voice. It is loud and we can make a difference.

### 3. Why is being a union member more important than ever right now?

Being part of a union allows me to speak up about issues that are not just about our jobs. Being part of a union is speaking out about social injustices, student rights, supporting public schools, etc. As union members, it's part of our job to educate legislators about what is going on because sometimes they are not really aware of what the underlying issues might be. Unions can be a strong voice for students and public schools; especially since the federal government has chosen an individual [Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos] who seeks to make school choice a household name.

### 4. Now that you've been to the RA, what will your next steps be?

I think we need to create awareness of issues among our locals and educate members about what is happening in the world of public education. We all have a tendency to stay in the trenches and just

teach, but with the possibility of the state constitution being reopened and the increase in debate about school choice, it is important to educate and mobilize members to be active — whether that is visiting the NYSUT Member Action Center (MAC) once a month, writing a letter or email to a legislator or Board of Regents member, or hosting a forum about a local topic that affects our local schools. Political action is about being in the know, educating others and inspiring action among your local.

### 5. Teacher centers have suffered from diminished funding over the years. As co-director of the Waterloo Teacher Resource Center, what are some needs that are not being met?

In past years there have been deficits, but our district didn't lay off anyone as we lost staff through attrition and our union agreed to take a cut in our raises to save jobs. Our district was financially stable, but I think our staff missed out on professional development opportunities in the past and students missed out on enrichment activities. We also closed a K-5 elementary building. Our teacher center is a stand-alone center which didn't feel the pinch of defunding as much as other area teacher centers; however, we received word that our funding is up this year — a first in a while.



## [ LETTERS ] Using sign language at home gives deaf children a literacy advantage

In response to "Five Questions for Judy Granger" (*NYSUT United*, April issue), I would like to clarify a misconception about literacy development among deaf children of deaf parents. Deaf children of deaf parents, in fact, often arrive at school with more language experience and, thus, are more likely to perform better on

measures of reading and writing skills than other deaf children.

Even though deaf children of deaf parents may not use spoken English on a daily basis, research shows there are advantages in English literacy development of having deaf parents.

Because deaf children can

communicate with their deaf parents using American Sign Language in everyday conversations with the opportunities for incidental learning and expanded knowledge of the world, they are more likely to understand stories (i.e., story development, mood and messages) and recognize different ways the English print

is used to convey messages (i.e., capitalized words to express strong emotion).

Thus, using American Sign Language as a first language with their parents is an asset, not a challenge, to learning to read and write in English.

— Debra Cole, high school teacher,  
Lexington School for the Deaf

[ CLASSIFIEDS ]

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LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA —RURAL farmhouse. Five bedrooms, sleeps 9. See site: <http://bandmantiques.wixsite.com/frenchcountryretreat>. Mike Berlinger, retired NYC teacher & NYSUT member, 717-371-5511.

SAINT AUGUSTINE BEACH — Three-bedroom, two-bath condominium. NYSUT discount. [jobscondorentals.com](http://jobscondorentals.com). 716-830-4635.

ADIRONDACK WATERFRONT CAMP — Screened porch, scenic view. \$875/week, May - November. No pets. [www.adirondacktracycamp.us](http://www.adirondacktracycamp.us). 518-582-4851.

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[ KUDOS! ]

**In print**

**Bill Meyer**, Bronxville Teachers Association, has written a middle-grade time travel adventure series that connects Ancient Egypt, King Tut and Detroit. *The Secret of the Scarab Beetle* is available at [www.sleepingbearpress.com](http://www.sleepingbearpress.com). Book two, *The Search for the Lost Prophecy*, will be released in October.

**Gail Rae-Garwood**, United Federation of Teachers retiree, has published her first novel, *Portal in Time*, a romantic time travel to 1885. For copies, visit [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

**Jessica Ryan**, Lynbrook TA, has co-authored a book with Kevin Sheehan. *Growing a Growth Mindset: Unlocking Character Strengths Through Children's Literature* provides teachers with an innovative approach to teaching the positive psychology constructs that underlie self-belief, goal motivation, and happiness using children's books. Visit [www.growingagrowthmindset.weebly.com](http://www.growingagrowthmindset.weebly.com).

**Yvonne Southerland**, UFT retiree, has published *The Moose is Loose: The Adventures of an Adirondack Moose and the Wiggletoes Family*. The children's book is available at the Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake; The Wild Center in Tupper Lake or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

**Duane Tananbaum**, Professional Staff Congress—Lehman College, has written *Herbert H. Lehman: A Political Biography*. Published by SUNY Press, the book "restores this four-time governor of New York State, U.S. Senator, humanitarian and reformer to his rightful place among the pantheon of liberal heroes of the mid-twentieth century." For digital or print copies, visit [www.sunypress.edu/p-6327-herbert-lehman.aspx](http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6327-herbert-lehman.aspx).

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

# Getting to know ... Michelle Valente

Michelle Valente is the high school cook manager for the Monroe-Woodbury Central School District and a member of the Monroe-Woodbury Teachers Association. She was interviewed by Colleen Buck, president of the Monroe-Woodbury TA nonteaching employees and a member of NYSUT's SRP Advisory Committee.

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

As the cook manager at Monroe-Woodbury High School, I serve breakfast and lunch for about 1,000 students a day. I try to make sure they have meals they love because, for some, it could be their only meal of the day. I also serve the high school staff.

I love my job because of the interaction with the students. I want to make a difference in their day. Sometimes my

smile can change how their day is going. I know their smiles can change mine.

**Tell me about your union involvement. How did you get involved?**

I stand together with my union brothers and sisters, including our teachers association. I attend meetings and work to get my coworkers involved. I keep them informed of any upcoming events and issues. We appreciate our union reps because, without them, we'd have nothing.

**How do you make a difference?**

I hope to make a difference in the kids' lives because that's why we are here. I get involved and help wherever I can. I'm especially drawn to our students with



MARTY KERINS JR

special needs. Whenever I am asked to volunteer at any of their events, my answer is always YES. They know they can count on me and it's a pleasure to do so.

**What about your community activities or hobbies?**

Most of my community involvement and volunteerism is with the special needs community. The students wanted to be a part of the football team and the

Michelle Valente is the school cook manager at Monroe-Woodbury High School and a member of the MWTA.

only way that was possible was for an adult to be with them, so I volunteer my time on the football field. They've taught me so much about football!

I also volunteer for our school's Interact Club's annual spaghetti dinner and the Rotary Club's annual dinner. Both of these events raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. I also help the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

I recently volunteered for a day when our district hosted the Special Olympics. What an amazing day! Working with our students with special needs has taught me so much. I see them rooting each other on instead of putting each other down. Their work ethic is amazing. I don't see their disability, I only see their ability.

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## May is Disability Awareness Month

### Are you aware that New York State public school employees are *not* automatically covered by New York State Disability Insurance?

If you are like most other NYSUT members, the answer is probably no. Unless you are one of the unlucky ones that realized this once you became disabled and then it was too late. This is why NYSUT Member Benefits endorses a disability insurance plan for its members to make sure you are protected against the devastating effects a disability can cause you and your family.

The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Disability Insurance Plan underwritten by Unimerica Life Insurance Company of New York is designed to protect your lifestyle, your income and your financial future.

This plan, designed exclusively for NYSUT members, offers the following benefits and features:

- Group membership rates
- Up to 60% of monthly income subject to policy limits
- Three customized coverage plan options
- Daily hospitalization benefit payment – 15-day maximum
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment benefits
- Choice of three convenient payment options
- Up to 20% payroll deduction discount

To learn more about this valuable coverage and how you can apply, contact a Unimerica Life Insurance Company of New York representative at **800-515-2471**, Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST, or view the brief educational presentation by scanning the QR code or visit the website at [www.brainshark.com/uhcms/NYSUT](http://www.brainshark.com/uhcms/NYSUT).



The Unimerica Life Insurance Company of New York Disability Plan is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5% of gross 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. The Insurer pools the premiums of Member Benefits participants who are insured for the purposes of determining premium rates and accounting. Coverage outside of this plan may have rates and terms that are not the same as those obtainable through Member Benefits. The Insurer or Member Benefits may hold premium reserves that may be used to offset rate increases and/or fund such other expenses related to the plan as determined appropriate by Member Benefits. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

This policy provides disability income insurance only. It does NOT provide basic hospital, basic medical or major medical insurance as defined by the New York State Department of Financial Services. The expected benefit ratio for this policy is 68%. This ratio is the portion of future premiums that the company expects to return as benefits, when averaged over all people with this policy. Life and Disability products are provided by Unimerica Life Insurance Company of New York which is located in New York, NY. This NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed Disability coverage is provided under Policy ADI-4002-A (UNY).

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One Penn Plaza, 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10119

NYSUT3-06/17

## [ LOCAL UNIONS IN ACTION ]

### Mahopac Teachers' Association



SOURCE: MAHOPAC TA FACEBOOK

- Members of the Mahopac Teachers' Association rock their flannels during a union solidarity day. Each month the local, led by President Thomas McMahon, hosts a day when members wear a particular color/item and support a charity. Past events include food drives, Toys for Tots collections and donations to the union's scholarship fund. The successful initiative came out of the union's participation in NYSUT's Local Action Project.

### Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

Due to the generosity of Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers members, retirees and other district staff, the union's annual holiday drive raised \$9,666. The funds purchased gift cards for more than 300 secondary students, and holiday gifts for more than 350 elementary students. The MVFT is led by Jeff Yonkers.

The massive effort was possible thanks to the work of numerous members, including Lillian Reynolds, Diana O'Sullivan, Melissa Hogan, Laura Mason, Sara Kincade and MVFT retiree Karen Wallace. The local also recognized district staffers and superintendent Kenneth Hamilton, who promoted the effort by announcing two districtwide dress down days.

Share news about your local union at [united@nysutmail.org](mailto:united@nysutmail.org); include "LIA" in the subject line.

### Arlington Teachers Association

The Arlington TA has continued its ambitious, longtime agenda of being an active community partner. The local, led by Bob Maier, has been involved in numerous charitable events and drives.

This school year alone, ATA members have raised thousands of dollars for the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie and donated several carloads of items to the Dutchess County SPCA. The ATA also provided players jerseys for the annual HOPE basketball game; proceeds from this year's event will benefit 35 graduating seniors who have suffered the loss of a parent or guardian. In April, the local partnered with Rebuilding Together Dutchess County to help local families make much-needed repairs on their homes.

## [ RETIREES IN ACTION ]



PROVIDED

- Proving once again that retirees play a significant role in NYSUT's "political army," scores of retiree activists traveled to Albany for the Committee of 100 lobby day in March.



PROVIDED

- NYSUT Board member Rod Sherman, RC 9, discusses the dangers of a constitutional convention with staffer Pete Savage during a recent workshop.



PROVIDED

- NYSUT Board member Kathleen Taylor, RC 13, and Jennifer Fuentez, Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation, travel to the Women's March in Washington, D.C.

### Did you know?



NYSUT Retiree Services consultants serve as a resource to retired members, retiree councils and in-service locals on NYSUT retiree matters.

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

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

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

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

**Barbara McCarthy**, RC 9 & 10  
518-783-7977

**TBD**, RC 11 & 45  
607-786-5742

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

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

**Kathleen Lyons**, RC 17-19  
516-496-2035

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

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

### Regional conferences

- RC 7 & 8, May 1, Doubletree, East Syracuse.** Retiree Services Consultant: Anne Marie Voutsinas
- RC 10, May 10, NYSUT HQ.** Retiree Services Consultant: Barb McCarthy
- RC 1-3 & 44, May 23, Millenium Hotel, Cheektowaga.** Retiree Services Consultant: Tracy Beatty
- RC 11 & 45, May 24, TBA.** Retiree Services Consultant: TBD
- RC 4 & 46, May 24, Radisson, Corning.** Retiree Services Consultant: Louise Ortman



# Open enrollment begins for Catastrophe Major Medical Plan

The trustees of the NYSUT Member Benefits Catastrophe Major Medical (CMM) Insurance Trust announce a limited-time, 45-day open enrollment opportunity for the CMM Plan from May 1 through June 15. NYSUT members who are in-service and reside in New York State, along with their eligible family members, may want to take advantage of this offer. Current

CMM Plan participants may want to consider adding eligible family members who are not presently enrolled.

It is important to note that the current CMM Plan will undergo significant benefit changes, effective Jan. 1, 2018; that is also the effective date for coverage to begin for new enrollees and dependents.

Current participants will NOT have to re-enroll in the CMM Plan to remain in

the plan in 2018 and beyond. However, those individuals who would like to enroll in the plan or enroll their dependents should review the “2018 CMM Plan Highlights” document included in the enrollment materials.

The materials can be accessed online at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org); click on “Open Enrollment Materials — Catastrophe Major Medical Plan.” Or,

contact Mercer Consumer, the CMM Plan’s administrator, toll-free at 888-386-9788. Please carefully read the materials to ensure that you are eligible.

Detailed information will be sent to current CMM Plan participants this fall regarding changes to the plan effective Jan. 1, 2018.

## SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

### FOR NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS MEMBER BENEFITS TRUST

This is a summary of the annual report of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust, EIN 22-2480854, Plan No. 503, for the period September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

The Board of Trustees of New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust has committed itself to pay certain vision and other claims incurred under the terms of the plan.

#### Insurance Information

The plan has contracts with various insurance companies to pay certain claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending August 31, 2016 were \$68,935,432.

Because they are so called “experience-rated” contracts, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total insurance premiums paid for the plan year ending August 31, 2016, the premiums paid under such “experience-rated” contracts were \$23,183,445 and the total of all benefit claims paid under these experience-rated contracts during the plan year was \$13,078,572.

#### Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$22,973,822 as of August 31, 2016, compared to \$34,402,109 as of September 1, 2015. During the plan year, the plan experienced a decrease in its net assets of \$11,428,287. This decrease includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets, that is, the difference between the value of the plan’s assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of \$13,050,587. This income included participants’ contributions of \$3,658,598, earnings from investments of \$2,412,733 and other income of \$6,979,256.

Plan expenses were \$24,478,874. These expenses included \$5,154,200 in administrative expenses, \$3,159,575 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries and \$16,165,099 in net transfers to other plans.

#### Your Rights To Additional Information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

1. an accountant’s report;
2. financial information and information on payments to service providers;
3. assets held for investment;
4. transactions in excess of 5% of the plan assets;
5. insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers; and
6. information regarding any common or collective trusts, pooled separate accounts, master trusts or 103-12 investment entities in which the plan participates.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of Ms. Lynette Metz, Fund Director, Trustees of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455, 518-213-6000. The charge to cover copying costs will be \$13.80 for the full annual report, or 15 cents per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan (Trustees of the New York State United Teachers Member Benefits Trust, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455) and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

# Retiring soon?

## How to maintain your NYSUT membership

The transition from active employment to retirement brings with it challenges that must be handled carefully — so let NYSUT Member Benefits help.

Remember, you **MUST** maintain NYSUT membership as a retiree in order to continue participating in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs and services.

You can continue your NYSUT membership in one of two ways:

1. If your local offers retiree membership, you must continue membership within your local. Compliance with your local's retiree membership requirements is a prerequisite for continued membership in NYSUT and the American Federation of Teachers.

2. If your local does not provide retiree membership, you will continue as an at-large member through the Retiree Council (RC) in your region. Make sure your local reports you as retired and changes your member code to "three" or writes "retired" on the membership report that is sent to NYSUT. Again, this will afford you membership in your geographic Retiree Council, NYSUT and the AFT.

Retiree membership is not automatic for the National Education Association. You may choose to join NEA as a Lifetime Retiree for a one-time fee of \$250.

At this time, as a current NYSUT member or retiree participating in NEA Member Benefits, you do not need to purchase retiree membership with NEA. For information on how to join NEA national and for an enrollment form, contact NYSUT Retiree Services at 800-342-9810, ext. 6291. For retirees from former NEA locals with an NEA insurance policy, you must maintain your NEA membership in order to keep the policy.

If you are a non-lifetime NEA retiree member or know someone who has been lost from the NEA/NY rolls, contact NYSUT Member Records at 800-342-9810, ext. 6224 for information on how to join NYSUT and NEA as a retiree.

For questions about establishing retiree membership, contact the following membership departments:

**United Federation of Teachers:**  
212-598-6855  
**United University Professions:**  
800-342-4206  
**Professional Staff Congress/CUNY:**  
212-354-1252  
All other NYSUT members:  
800-342-9810, ext. 6224.

For more information on maintaining your NYSUT membership or NYSUT retiree programs, contact the NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant serving your region:

**Buffalo area (RC 1-3, 44):**

Tracy Beatty, 716-634-7132

**Jamestown area (RC 4, 46):**

Louise Ortman, 716-664-7425

**Rochester area (RC 5-6):**

Peter Randazzo, 585-454-5550

**Syracuse/Utica area (RC 7-8):**

Anne Marie Voutsinas, 315-431-4040

**North Country/Capital District (RC 9-10):**

Barbara McCarthy, 518-783-7977

**Southern Tier (RC 11, 45):**

Mark Padgett, 607-786-5742

**Greater Capital District/Mid-Hudson area (RC 12-13):**

Jennifer Shaad-Derby, 518-783-7977

**Orange, Rockland, Putnam and Westchester counties (RC 14-16):**

Ellen Pincus, 914-592-4411

**Nassau region (RC 17-19):**

Kathleen Lyons, 516-496-2035

**Suffolk region (RC 20-23):**

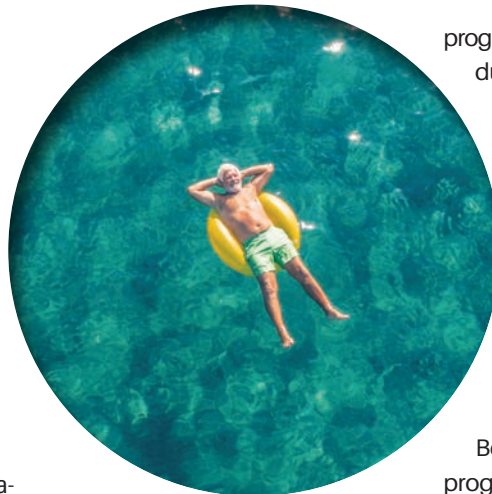
Joan Perrini, 631-273-8822

**Florida (RC 43):**

Judith Kalb, 561-994-4929, ext. 129

### Payroll to pension deduction

The transition from payroll deduction of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed



programs to pension deduction is NOT immediate and automatic. However, follow the steps below for a smooth transition:

Please Note: To be eligible for pension deduction of Member Benefits-endorsed programs, you must be receiving your regular 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, or receive income from a monthly lifetime annuity from TIAA.

- ❑ Contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 when you know your definite retirement date; Member Benefits will then share that information to each of the plan administrators of programs you participate in.
- ❑ Call each plan administrator of programs you participate in to verify your address so you can be billed at home once your payroll deductions stop; Member Benefits can provide you with the necessary contact information. You should receive a bill for each program you had on payroll deduction. If you do not receive a bill, contact the applicable program administrator to verify that a bill was mailed to your proper address. Any discounts you enjoyed with payroll deduction will continue for up to one year with your home billing. Pension deduction yields the same discounts and additional coverage as payroll deduction.

- ❑ Make sure to pay each bill you receive. You must be on home billing for one billing cycle so your pension system has time to put your permanent monthly pension benefit in place. Even though you might be receiving a monthly pension benefit, this does not mean that your permanent benefit has been finalized; deductions can only be taken from the permanent benefit.
- ❑ When you receive the bill for the next premium, it should include a Pension Deduction Authorization Card. Complete and sign the card, and send it back with the bill to the plan administrator in lieu of payment. If you do not receive a Pension Deduction Authorization Card with your second bill, contact Member Benefits so one can be sent to you.

- ❑ Upon receipt of your Pension Deduction Authorization Card, the plan administrator will transmit the details to Member Benefits regarding pension deduction of your program(s). Member Benefits then submits this information to your pension system to start the deductions with your next monthly benefit. This process must be done for each program you participate in. Contact Member Benefits if you have any questions along the way.

Please allow time for each of the steps above to be completed.

### Leaving your bargaining unit soon?

If you are leaving your bargaining unit at the end of the school year for any reason other than retirement and are participating in any Member Benefits-endorsed programs, you must join NYSUT as an Associate Member-Continuing NYSUT Member Benefits Coverage to continue participating in those programs. Payroll deduction is not available for Associate Members.

If you have any questions about continuing NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs or pension deduction, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.



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## Retirement planning tools at your fingertips

One of the biggest decisions you will make is deciding when to retire. But how will you know when you are ready? Luckily, the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System has a host of tools you can use at any point in your career.

Most members get a projection of future pension benefits on their Member Annual Statement. Your statement may include up to three benefit projections based on different retirement dates. Although these benefit calculations are typically conservative, they are based on your retirement account information and are an effective planning tool that you can use throughout your career.

You can use our online benefit calculator to estimate potential pension amounts based on different scenarios. For example, you can see how much your pension would increase if you work longer and retire with more years of service and a higher average salary. The calculator also projects benefit amounts under the various pension payment options available to you. Visit our website at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/projecting-your-pension.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/projecting-your-pension.php) to use the calculator.

If you are within five years of your earliest eligible date of retirement, you can request a customized benefit projection by phone or mail. For phone requests, call 866-805-0990, press "three," then "one," then "four" and



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

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

enter your account information. In most cases, it will be mailed to you the next business day. If you are not certain you have received retirement service credit for all of your public employment, you can complete and mail a Request for Estimate form (RS6030), available at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/rs6030.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/rs6030.pdf). Please be sure to include as much information as you can about your public employment history.

ERS offers many tools to help you plan for your retirement. You should also consider other sources of retirement income, like Social Security and deferred compensation. For a modest annual fee, members can access expert planning advice through the NYSUT-endorsed Financial Counseling Program (details at [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org/program-service/legal-and-financial/financial-counseling-program](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org/program-service/legal-and-financial/financial-counseling-program)). For more tips on retirement planning, subscribe to our blog at [NYRetirementNews.com](http://NYRetirementNews.com). You can also read the ERS retirement planning booklet, *How Do I Prepare to Retire*, at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vo1709.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vo1709.php).

### NYSUT ERS consultants

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

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

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

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

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

## When early retirement is an option

**Q:** I have a September birthday. Do I have to work until I'm 55, or can I simply leave at the end of the previous school year and begin collecting my pension after my birthday arrives in September?

**A:** Yes, you can retire and wait to collect. However, because you'll lose a year of service credit and possibly lower your Final Average Salary, your pension will be less than if you had waited an additional year. Also, a word of caution — if you work elsewhere after your last day of district employment and your first day of retirement, you could jeopardize your beneficiaries' eligibility for your paragraph two death benefit. Since retiring before you officially turn 55 could have serious ramifications, you should schedule a New York State Teachers' Retirement System consultation before making a final decision, 800-348-7298, ext. 6100.

### NYSUT TRS consultants

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

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

Tim Southerton • 631-273-8822  
[tsouther@nysutmail.org](mailto:tsouther@nysutmail.org)

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

Jolene DiBrango  
[trs-q&a@nysutmail.org](mailto:trs-q&a@nysutmail.org)



**Q:** I've met with my NYSTRS representative, filled out my retirement application and I'm about to submit it to NYSTRS. Should I send it by certified mail or by regular post?

**A:** Congratulations on your upcoming, and well-deserved, retirement. We're glad you raised this question because it's an important one. Retirement applications should always be sent by certified or registered mail, and you should request a return receipt. Since retirement applications must be received by NYSTRS one to 90 days before your effective retirement date, having proof of the date it's received is important. And remember, if you are seriously ill or injured, you should file a disability retirement application as soon as possible. Contact your NYSTRS representative for information about filing for disability retirement, 800-348-7298, ext. 6010.

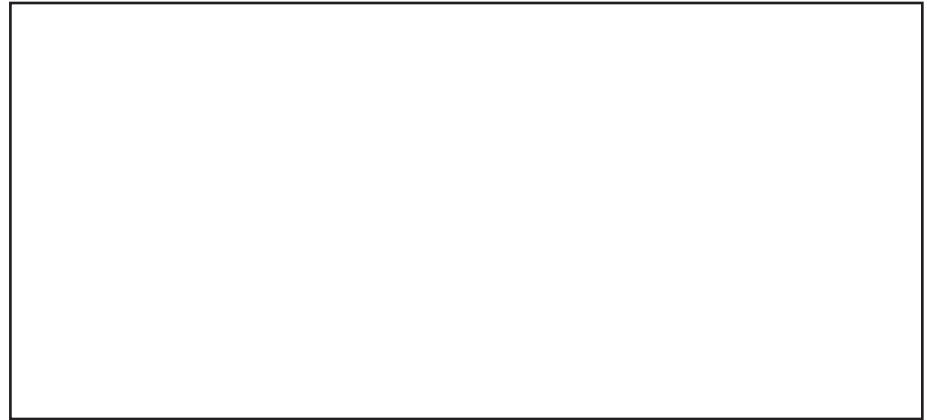
### Did you know



The New York State Teachers' Retirement System has thousands in unclaimed funds and abandoned accounts. To see if you're owed a refund, visit <https://secure.nystrs.org/unclaimedFunds/unclaimedfunds.aspx>

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