

**What every
NYSUT member
should know**

nysut
A Union of Professionals

VITAL INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

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Welcome to NYSUT, our union representing more than 600,000 professionals who work in, or are retired from, New York's schools, colleges and health care facilities. We are classroom teachers, college and university faculty and professional staff, school bus drivers, librarians, custodians, secretaries, cafeteria workers, teaching assistants and teacher aides, nurses and health care technicians. We are one union — working together to remain strong for our members and champion the good work you do every day.

NYSUT's number one priority is you, our member. We are dedicated to improving our working conditions and our professions. We are united by a common commitment to improve the quality of education and health care for the people of New York State.

NYSUT offers many benefits and services; take some time to familiarize yourself with them as outlined in this publication.

Thank you for all you do on the job, in your community and for our union. Because of you, NYSUT is stronger than ever!

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Pallotta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Andrew Pallotta, *NYSUT President*

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NYSUT History

- 1960** United Federation of Teachers formed in New York City
- 1960** UFT, led by Albert Shanker, strikes New York City schools
- 1965** New York State Teachers Association (NEA) excludes administrators from membership
- 1967** New York State Legislature passes Taylor Law
- 1971** Shanker elected president of United Teachers of New York (AFT)
- 1971** Shanker and NYSTA President Thomas Hobart enter into merger talks
- 1972** Merger agreement signed, creating New York State United Teachers. Hobart elected president and Shanker elected executive vice president
- 1974** Shanker elected president of American Federation of Teachers
- 1976** NYSUT disaffiliates from National Education Association
- 2005** Hobart retires, succeeded by Richard Iannuzzi
- 2006** NYSUT merges with NEA/New York
- 2014** Karen Magee elected NYSUT president
- 2017** Andrew Pallotta elected NYSUT president



Your union is here for you.



For your professional development:

- Low-cost graduate and in-service courses
- Professional development workshops for professionals
- Professional development workshops for educators
- National Board Certification assistance and funding subsidies
- APPR training support for educators (TED) and Teacher Practice Rubric
- Information and briefing bulletins on emerging issues in education
- Statewide and regional meetings and conferences
- Network of 127 NYS Teacher Centers
- Mentoring support for new teachers
- Information about on-the-job safety and health concerns
- Free educator program connecting the classroom with high-tech careers (Semi High Tech U Teacher Program)

For your political voice:

- Year-round state and federal lobbying on important legislative issues.
- Rallying member contributions to support pro-public-education, pro-labor initiatives — VOTE-COPE
- Organizing members for special Albany lobbying events — Committee of 100
- Fostering member e-activism through online faxes, emails and letters to lawmakers — NYSUT Member Action Center — (MAC)
- Organizing year-round member lobbying in localities statewide — NYSUT Political Action Committee (PAC)

For your union information:

- *NYSUT United*, unique union information several times a year
- www.nysut.org, real-time updates on union news and resources
- Text updates with the latest legislative alerts (Text the word VOICE to 73095)
- Newsletters for targeted NYSUT constituencies
- Blog posts offering a deeper understanding of what NYSUT members do (www.itswhatwedo.org)
- [Twitter.com/nysut](https://twitter.com/nysut)
- [Facebook.com/NYSUTUnited](https://facebook.com/NYSUTUnited)



- [Blogs.nysut.org](https://blogs.nysut.org)
- [Flickr.com/photos/nysut](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nysut)
- [Youtube.com/nysutonline](https://www.youtube.com/nysutonline)
- Leader Briefing and Member Briefing
- Free logo and newsletter designs for locals by NYSUT designers
- Free StateWeb website hosting for NYSUT locals
- Free media strategy help through NYSUT media relations

For your protection in the workplace:

- Help filing and processing grievances
- Negotiations support: acting as chief spokesperson, consultant and advisor, and help with bargaining research and proposal writing
- Help during impasse or negotiations crisis
- Help with arbitration matters including representing the grievant at arbitration hearings, preparing witnesses, writing briefs and selecting arbitrators
- Regional workshops and conferences
- Handling representation matters before PERB and NLRB
- Providing special assistance and training, including working with community groups
- Help with human rights violations, workers' compensation, OSHA and more
- Organizing projects and recruiting new members
- Budget analysis for locals' use during bargaining
- Contract comparisons, salary analysis, benefits and work conditions
- Community surveys to gauge public support for the work of members
- Review of APPR plans to help locals develop and modify plans
- Local leader training for developing and implementing SLOs
- Teacher certification questions answered

For on-the-job help with legal matters:

- 3020a teacher disciplinary proceedings
- Section 75 civil service disciplinary hearings
- Family and medical leave act claims
- State and federal wage and hour claims
- Defense of teaching license under NYCRR Part 83
- Civil Service protection of seniority lists and recall rights
- Contract analysis and salary research during collective bargaining

For your classroom:

- Free posters highlighting noteworthy events and individuals
- More than 20 different educator handouts, including parent teacher conferences, professional development days and workshops
- Dozens of handouts for health care, SRP and other NYSUT members
- New low, or no cost, books for Title 1 schools through First Book
- NYS learning standards teaching resources through *sharemylesson.com*

For specialized constituencies:

School Related Professionals

- SRP Leadership Conference and regional SRP conferences
- SRP NewsLink, quarterly leadership newsletter
- NYSUT SRP Advisory Committee

New Members

- *The Insider*, quarterly leadership newsletter
- Help with new member outreach
- New member booklets and training opportunities

Retirees

- NYSUT Retiree Office
- Retiree Advisory Committee
- Retiree Regional Membership Conferences, 13 in New York and Florida

Small and Rural Locals

- Advisory Council on Small and Rural Locals

BOCES

- BOCES Statewide Advisory Council
- BOCES Lobby Day

Public Higher Education

- Community College Statewide Leadership
- NYSUT's Higher Education Council
- Higher Ed Lobby Day

Private Sector Higher Education

- Annual meeting for local leaders and private-sector locals

Health care

- Professional Issues Forum on Health Care
- Annual Professional Development Conference

Public Employees

- Presentations and workshops
- One- and two-day informational meetings



Special Act, 4201 and 853 Schools

- Presentations and workshops
- One-day informational meetings

For your family finances:

- Insurance programs: Life, auto and home, disability, catastrophe major medical, long-term care, dental and vision, pet insurance
- Legal & Financial: Synchrony Bank; ClearPoint Credit Counseling Solutions; ID Watchdog; 403(b) Field Guide; 401(k) Consumer Guide; Financial Counseling Programs; Legal Service Plan
- Group Benefits: flexible benefit plans; health reimbursement accounts; group financial counseling; group health advocate program; group dental, term life, vision and disability plans; group legal service plans; group ID Watchdog program
- NYSUT Member Benefits online financial planning center (MB website)
- Travel: Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals; Grand Circle Travel; Orlando Employee Discounts; Car and Truck Rentals
- Entertainment: Bose®, Powell's Books
- Online Shopping: Buyer's Edge, Inc.; 1800Flowers.com; Working Advantage
- Personal Services: EPIC Hearing Service Plan; Online Defensive Driving
- Home Supplies: Heat USA; American Solar Partners; Propane.pro
- Payroll and pension deduction available

For other needs:

- Counseling and care-giver referrals in times of emotional challenges (NYSUT Social Services)
- Funding help in times of personal disaster (NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund)
- Trained consultants available to answer TRS and ERS questions
- Pre-retirement planning workshops offered statewide
- Grant funding for short-term projects advancing specific initiatives (NYSUT Solidarity Grant)
- Webinars, conferences and workshops detailing NYSUT member discounts (Member Benefits)
- A full-time polling center for researching important issues
- Help for locals, and local benefit funds, with budgeting and finance questions
- Printing, copying and mailing services available to local and retiree councils
- Help finding and ordering Union Made and Made in the U.S.A. products
- Meeting space for local and/or union-related events

Welcome to NYSUT!



NYSUT is a federation of approximately 1,325 local unions representing more than 600,000 members statewide. NYSUT members serve in a variety of capacities, including teachers, School-Related Professionals, academic and professional faculty in higher education, professionals in education and health care, municipal, county and state professionals, employees in libraries and nonprofit organizations, and retirees. They belong to local affiliates ranging in size from the 200,000-member United Federation of Teachers in New York City to locals of fewer than 10 members. More than 95 percent of the teachers in New York’s public elementary and secondary schools are members of NYSUT, along with many other pre-K-12 school employees, including teacher aides and teaching assistants, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, food service personnel, health care professionals, nurses, security personnel and therapists. NYSUT also represents private school and charter school employees.

The academic and professional staffs of the State University, City University and many community colleges and private-sector colleges are members, as are thousands of nurses, psychologists, physicians and other professionals in health care facilities and other governmental agencies. When NYSUT members retire, they enjoy lifetime membership in both NYSUT and the American Federation of Teachers, one of our two national affiliates. Retirees can join NYSUT’s other national affiliate, the National Education Association.

This book provides new members with an overview of NYSUT. While much of the information relates to issues of concern to pre-K-12 members, information of interest to other constituencies is included, as well.



Governance

Members make their voices heard by electing local delegates who represent them at NYSUT’s annual convention, which is called the NYSUT Representative Assembly, or the NYSUT RA. The NYSUT RA is NYSUT’s highest policy-making body, except for a membership referendum.

NYSUT delegates are elected to one- to three-year terms by secret ballot of each local’s membership. Their terms vary according to local constitutions. These delegates elect the five NYSUT statewide officers, and the 82-member Board of Directors, to three-year terms. Delegates vote on policy resolutions and amendments to the NYSUT constitution and bylaws that determine the

governance and policies of the union. Many delegates represent their locals at labor council meetings and at election district meetings held by NYSUT board members to hear local concerns and inform locals of NYSUT's efforts on their behalf.

The NYSUT Board of Directors meets at least quarterly to conduct business between RAs. A 21-member executive committee meets 10 times a year. Each NYSUT local elects its own leadership, operates under a local constitution and "owns" its collective bargaining agreement.

Committees

NYSUT uses special task forces and standing committees to help gather information on timely issues and to initiate policy and position statements for submission to the Board of Directors and RA. Certain constituencies of the membership have their own representatives on the Board, providing input to all Board discussions. Health care, retirees, public and private higher education and School-Related Professionals are all groups that have Board representatives.

The standing committees and task forces currently constituted are BOCES Statewide Conference Planning, Community Colleges, Financial Review, Higher Education, Career and Technical Education, Political Action, Retiree, School-Related Professionals, Small and Rural Locals, Civil & Human Rights, LGBTQ, womens issues, Committee of 100, Task Force on Education Policy, Educational Technology, Health & Safety, Special Education, Early Childhood, English Language Learners and Teacher Centers. NYSUT also has eight content-area committees that advise the organization regarding the standards and assessments in Pre-K-12 schools. They help NYSUT provide a professional response to Regents' initiatives.

Staff

NYSUT employs more than 400 people at its Albany headquarters and 16 regional offices to carry out union programs and to serve affiliates and members. With the exception of the metro locals, every bargaining unit has a NYSUT labor relations specialist.

Affiliations

NYSUT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. It is an active participant in the organized labor movement and affiliated with the state and national AFL-CIO and Education International, a worldwide association of teacher unions. NYSUT partners with several community and human rights groups, and its members work closely with groups such as the American Cancer

Society, American Heart Association, United Way and the Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS, of which NYSUT is a founding member.

Dues

Members pay local, NYSUT and AFT or NEA dues through their locals. Dues provide resources for the unions to serve members. Each local determines its dues structure, but must include provisions (pass-through) for state and national affiliates. NYSUT RA delegates vote on NYSUT dues, while delegates to the NEA and AFT conventions set national dues.

What every member should know about ...

Collective Bargaining: The Taylor Law/Civil Service Law

Public employees in New York State have the right to be represented by unions and to bargain collectively with their employers for salary, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. This right should not be taken lightly. It was not recognized in New York until the Legislature enacted the Taylor Law in 1967. Collective bargaining for school employees is currently illegal in five states; severely restricted in four states; and in 11 states, public employers are permitted to bargain with their employees — but most often do not. Private-sector members are covered under the National Labor Relations Act, which likewise establishes the right of private-sector members to organize and bargain collectively.

The Taylor Law

Before the Taylor Law was enacted, public employees in New York State had no legally recognized collective bargaining rights. Under the Condon-Wadlin Act, a 1947 law that the Taylor Law replaced, striking public employees were penalized by being fired. They could only be reinstated under a three-year pay freeze and five-year probation. The Public Employees' Fair Employment Act (Taylor Law) was enacted in 1967 following a series of public-sector strikes, including the 12-day New York City transit strike a year earlier. The state Legislature granted amnesty to the striking employees, and Gov. Nelson Rockefeller appointed a committee to recommend legislation regarding public-sector employee rights. The result was the Taylor Law. It formally establishes:

- The right of public employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers;





- The right to representation by employee organizations (unions) of their own choosing;
 - The requirement that public employers (including school districts) negotiate with their employees and enter into written agreements (contracts) with their employees' chosen representatives;
 - Procedures for resolving contract disputes (impasses);
 - Prohibition of improper labor practices by either side;
- Creation of the Public Employment Relations Board to administer the law; and
 - The requirement that bargaining unit members who choose not to join a union pay an agency fee, and that use of the fee for political and ideological purposes only incidentally related to bargaining and to which the agency fee payer objects, is subject to a rebate procedure.

The Taylor Law still denies public employees the right to strike. The penalties for striking are loss of pay for each day the employee is on strike, plus a fine of an additional day's pay for every day on strike and potential discipline for misconduct.

NYSUT is always working to win legislation to improve the provisions of the Taylor Law. For example, the 1982 "Triborough" amendment mandated that if a collective bargaining agreement expires, its terms and conditions continue until a new agreement takes effect. That amendment has helped thousands of members avoid hardships when negotiations are impeded by harsh economic conditions, recalcitrant employers or both. An earlier improvement eliminated the "probation penalty" (probation for one year) against tenured teachers who went on strike.

Civil Service Law

Most public employees are covered under New York State Civil Service Law. This law establishes specific "jurisdictional classifications" (job classes) that are used to define the job qualifications, duties and employment rights associated with each job title. County and municipal civil service commissions are responsible for reviewing the duties of specific jobs and determining the appropriate job title for those duties. Generally, School-Related Professional members will be guaranteed protection under the law; however, certain employees in positions in the non-competitive (with less than five years service) and labor classes must receive the protection of their employment discipline rights through the local collective-bargaining agreement.

Civil Service Law covers such areas as recruitment, application, examination and appointment to job titles; probationary periods; promotions; leave(s) of absence; layoff and recall of competitive class employees; and disciplinary rights (Section 75 rights).

Motor Vehicle Law

School bus drivers are subject to the provisions of the state’s Motor Vehicle Law and Education Law, as well as federal regulations. Drivers are responsible for meeting specific licensing and physical examination requirements. Federal regulations require that school bus drivers be subject to random drug and alcohol tests.

Health care services

Nurses, whether practicing in a school, hospital or community, are licensed under Education Law (Nurse Practice Act Education Law, Article 139). This law defines their scope of practice.

Bargaining services

Employees in an overwhelming majority of school districts in New York State are represented by local unions affiliated with NYSUT. While the local union is the bargaining agent for its members, NYSUT provides whatever assistance the union may require to carry out its duties. In many instances, a NYSUT labor relations specialist represents the local union at the bargaining table and in the administration of the collective bargaining agreement. The LRS advocates on behalf of the members at the local level in front of impartial arbitrators and at the Public Employment Relations Board and, for private-sector members, the National Labor Relations Board. He or she works with the local affiliate in the capacity of consultant, communicator, trainer and facilitator to resolve local issues.

Legal services

NYSUT maintains a staff of full-time attorneys to assist locals and members facing job-related problems. Members are guaranteed representation by an attorney in all disciplinary and most licensing cases. These attorneys have also represented members before the commissioner of education, PERB, the NLRB, other administrative agencies and in state and federal court.



What every member should know about ...



Professional Development

NYSUT is committed to meaningful and appropriate professional development for members throughout their careers. NYSUT provides and supports a wide variety of resources to enhance your professional learning:

NYSUT Education & Learning Trust

The NYSUT Education & Learning Trust (ELT) is the professional learning source for NYSUT members. The ELT offers courses, seminars and educational programs for teachers and School-Related Professionals across the state for professional growth, to meet certification requirements and to obtain new certificate titles or extensions. ELT's courses may also help you earn salary differentials, depending on your district contract.

Ninety percent of individuals who have completed an ELT course or seminar rank them among the best they have ever had. ELT programs are modeled on best practices, current research-based strategies and real-life applications. They are taught by current educators and offered in your own district, a teacher center site, a nearby school or online.

NYSUT ELT offers:

- Graduate and in-service courses. Courses address topics such as classroom management and discipline, literacy, special education and inclusive classrooms and working with diverse learners;
- Partnership programs with colleges that lead to master's degrees;
- Undergraduate courses, seminars and test preparation programs to help teaching assistants earn degrees and meet state certification requirements;
- Free courses for new members;
- SRP seminars for members who provide instructional support, transportation, secretarial, custodial, medical and security services for schools. Workshops include: ABC's: An Introductory Guide to Being a Professional; Supporting Students with Autism; Managing Student Behavior; School Secretary: First Contact/First Impression; and Classroom Partners: The Team Approach.
- Online learning;
- A variety of programs that meet Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) state requirements;



- Annual Professional Performance Review programs to help prepare teachers to proactively navigate the teacher evaluation process, including evidence presentation and implementing the NYS Learning Standards;
- Training for administrators and teachers implementing the Teacher Evaluation and Development system and NYSUT Teacher Practice Rubric;
- Mentor and coaching training.

For more information or to register for a course, visit www.nysut.org/elt. Contact ELT at 800-528-6208 or ELTmail@nysutmail.org.

Department of Research and Educational Services

NYSUT's Department of Research and Educational Services provides up-to-date critical information on educational issues. The department regularly conducts member phone surveys and publishes fact sheets on emerging educational issues from pre-K through post-grad. Research and Educational Services information can be found at the NYSUT website, www.nysut.org, by clicking on the resources link. The department oversees committee work and sponsors statewide and regional meetings and conferences.

The department offers a NYS Learning Standards resources page with lesson plans and accompanying videos. Teachers demonstrate how to incorporate instructional shifts into their practice, describing what has worked as well as the challenges.

Resources to support the needs of English Language Learners

The NYSUT Statewide English Language Learner Committee has developed resources to assist educators working with ELLS, which can be viewed at www.nysut.org/resources.

Certification

Certification is a requirement for continued employment as a teacher or teaching assistant in a public school district or BOCES in New York, and it is the member's responsibility to maintain it. Certificates are issued by the State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives. If you have questions about certification in general, visit the Office of Teaching Initiatives website at www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/. If you have questions specific to your situation, log in to your TEACH account to check the status of your certificates. Members can also access regional certification specialists at most of the BOCES across the state. Go to [//www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/regionalcenters.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/regionalcenters.html).

In managing your certification status, it is imperative that you keep your own records on all of your efforts to obtain and keep certification. If you have certification issues that you cannot resolve, contact your local union leadership for support and assistance. Problems with certification lead to problems with your employment.

Members can access NYSUT Fact Sheets on specific certification topics at www.nysut.org/certification. These Fact Sheets use everyday language to explain state regulatory requirements and address the most often-asked questions from members regarding state certification.

Maintaining Teacher Certification — Registering with SED

Beginning July 1, 2016, all permanently, or professionally certified teachers or educational leaders and Level III teaching assistant certificate holders working in a NYS public school or BOCES are required to register with SED’s TEACH system. In 2016-17, individuals can register at any time yet SED has asked for individuals to register in the month of their birth to limit the stress on the TEACH system. Registration with SED is required every five years for certificate holders who continue to work in NYS public schools or BOCES. There is no fee for registration and during 2016-17 SED will not be implementing a late fee for individuals who register after their birth month.

Professionally certified classroom teachers/educational leaders and Level III Teaching Assistants are required to complete CTLE hours during each five-year registration period.

While school districts and BOCES are required to report CTLE hours to SED for employees who work more than 90 days in a school year, the new regulations also require certificate holders to maintain a complete record that includes: the title of the program, total hours completed, number of hours targeting the needs of ELLs, the providing sponsor’s name (district, BOCES, teacher center, etc), attendance verification, and date/location of program. These records are to be kept for three years after the five-year cycle in which they were applied. While members were always advised to keep their own records, now you are required to do so.

See www.nysut.org/certification for additional information.

NYS Teacher Centers

NYSUT strongly supports the network of teacher centers created through our legislative efforts and funded by New York State. Teacher centers provide high quality, research-based professional development programs and services for teachers that are developed and implemented by teachers. Each teacher center is governed by a policy board that includes a majority of teachers appointed by the union president. Teacher centers form partnerships with colleges, state and county agencies, local businesses, and numerous institutions and organizations



to provide opportunities for new learning for educators. The State Education Department has focused the work of teacher centers to align with current state and federal initiatives, including implementation of the Common Core State Standards, using data to inform instruction and implementing teacher evaluation systems. For more information on the statewide network of teacher centers and the programs they offer, go to www.teachercenters.org.

National Board Certification

Created by teachers, for teachers, National Board Certification is recognized as the profession's national mark of accomplished teaching. In 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Board was created as an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental body with a majority of teacher members. It is a voluntary, rigorous, peer-reviewed process for certifying educators in 25 certificate areas. The National Board application process consists of four components: Content Knowledge; Differentiation in Instruction; Teaching Practice and Learning Environment; and Effective and Reflective Practitioner. Components can be completed in a year or over three years, along with three portfolio entries (submitted online) and one computer-based assessment (administered at a local testing center).

The NYS Albert Shanker Grant Program, named after the legendary union leader who first suggested the idea of National Board Certification, covers the entire \$1,900 fee for all 4 components. The program also provides up to \$500 per candidate to districts for supportive activities. Funding for the Shanker Grant is limited and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/ashanker/albertshanker.html

Currently there are more than 1,780 NBCTs in NYS. More than 300 locals have negotiated financial and support incentives for teachers to seek National Board Certification.

NYSUT supports teachers pursuing National Board Certification by providing funding opportunities for New York State Teacher Centers to support a National Board Certification Writing Institute.

NYSUT Education & Learning Trust offers seminars and courses to assist members pursuing national certification. NYSUT ELT offers three graduate credits through Empire State College for each completed component. NYSUT also advocates with the state Legislature and governor for continued funding for Shanker grants. For more information, go to www.nysut.org/nbpts.



The National Board Council of New York State is a network of NBCT's; www.nbcny.org offers workshops, cohort, summer institutes and other activities in support of candidates. You may also contact the National Board at <http://boardcertifiedteachers.org/for-candidates> or 1-800-22TEACH (800-228-3224).

NYSUT subject area committees



NYSUT established content area committees to assist the Board of Directors in developing policy regarding the New York State Learning Standards and Assessments as well as on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. To meet the needs of NYSUT constituents, these committees have been realigned to include English language learners; career and technical education; special education; early childhood; education technology; math, science and technology; social studies; ELA; languages other than English; health and physical education; family and consumer sciences; and the arts — music, dance, theater and visual arts. In addition to reviewing State Education Department documents pertaining to curriculum, instruction and assessments, the committees have developed, with the PTA, parent and family brochures on foreign language, health, physical education, and family and consumer sciences.

Many of the committee members serve on various academic and assessment committees for the state, NYSUT, AFT and NEA.

Additional professional development resources

Members who help their local union in the areas of leadership, public relations, communications, finances, record-keeping, negotiations, contract enforcement, school restructuring and reform or data processing can take advantage of workshops and material from NYSUT on each of those topics. NYSUT also sponsors statewide conferences for members of constituent groups within the union, including community colleges, SRPs, health care and retirees. The sessions focus on issues and concerns unique to each group.

On-the-job safety and health concerns such as indoor air pollution, asbestos hazards, toxic chemicals, and the importance of local safety and health committees are addressed in NYSUT seminars and literature. NYSUT also offers workshops and training programs that are of special interest to SRPs.

Your NYSUT labor relations specialist is the local union's source for information about training on union topics and other workshops, including assertiveness training, conflict resolution and other subjects.

Our national affiliates, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA), are sources of training and information. They make available to members videos and other materials on many topics and offer courses, workshops and conferences for members. Ask your local president if your local participates in these programs. If not, you can inquire about these offerings through your regional office or the AFT PSRP division at 800-238-1133.

Share My Lesson, developed for teachers by teachers, is a site where educators create and share their work. The platform also provides an online community for collaboration. Topics include all aspects of the Common Core Learning Standards, as well as advice and guides. Share My Lesson was developed by the American Federation of Teachers and TES Connect, the largest network of teachers in the world. See www.sharemylesson.com/.



What every member should know about ...

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)

In 2010, legislation was enacted (Chapter 103 of the Laws of 2010), prescribing changes to the annual performance evaluation of all teachers and principals. The requirement does not apply to teaching assistants, teacher aides or pupil personnel titles.

Under the law, school districts and BOCES are required to conduct an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) for each teacher and principal, resulting in a rating of “highly effective,” “effective,” “developing,” or “ineffective.”

The 2015-16 state budget included provisions that substantially altered the APPR system, including greater reliance on state standardized tests. NYSUT went to court to challenge the State Education Commissioner’s regulations and advocated strongly for legislative changes. In Fall 2015, increased resistance to the poor implementation and improper use of state assessments associated with the Common Core Learning Standards led Gov. Cuomo to create a task force charged with making recommendations for the state’s standards, curriculum and assessments. NYSUT successfully pushed hard for the task force to recommend decoupling the consequences of state assessments from APPR until a new system could be phased in.

In December 2015, the Board of Regents voted to implement a four-year moratorium on the consequences of using the state’s grades 3-8 ELA and math assessment in APPR, while the State Education Department works on revising the standards and transitioning to a new vendor for the state assessments. The Regents recognize they must do this work first to restore confidence in the state assessments and will then consider changes to the teacher and principal evaluation system. During this transition period, school districts and local bargaining units negotiated





transitional APPR plans. Ratings are now determined using a new matrix that includes teacher observation and other measures of student performance to show student growth. Teacher's growth measures, derived from the grade 3-8 ELA and math assessments, will continue to be calculated but are provided for informational purposes only.

NYSUT continues to oppose the use of state assessment in APPR, to advocate for a fair appropriate evaluation system that fosters professional development, removes the punitive aspects of 3012-d and returns local control.

What every member should know about ...

Political Action

These are volatile political times and public education is under attack. Reductions in state support for our schools and institutions of higher education are having a direct and serious impact on the programs and services we provide. The tax cap law put into place in 2011 compounds the problem of funding quality education in this state. Politics impacts every school district and public higher education institution, and the working conditions of every school employee, because laws and regulations affecting every member's terms and conditions of employment are passed by lawmakers and implemented by government agencies in Albany and Washington, D.C. The union's Legislative Department drafts, introduces and lobbies for bills affecting state aid to schools and colleges, licensure, tenure, occupational health and safety, education standards, health care, pension and retirement.

New NYSUT members should know that we welcome your involvement in political action. New members are often most at risk of layoffs in difficult fiscal times.

In the past, NYSUT secured legislation to establish an early retirement option for members and an incentive for public employees that will save money and jobs and allow members to retire earlier. In recent years the union has been able to stave off cuts to our schools, kill dangerous proposals such as vouchers in Albany, and protect tenure rights.

NYSUT lobbied for and won sweeping changes in the way violence is to be reduced in our schools. The groundbreaking safe schools legislation requires all school districts to establish codes of conduct to ensure that our schools are safe places in which to teach and learn.

NYSUT also secured legislation to guarantee automatic cost-of-living pension increases for its public sector retirees — even future retirees like you. State aid to our schools helps keep your class size down, invests in your professional development and keeps property taxes stable. A significant percentage of an average school district’s budget is funded by the state and therefore working to secure additional state funding is an important goal for NYSUT.

NYSUT’s Legislative Department lobbies state and federal representatives to help retain professional enhancements we fought for and won. Support for our public schools comes from the efforts of hundreds of grass-roots lobbyists. This statewide, grass-roots network of member-volunteers, called the Committee of 100, adds local political impact to NYSUT’s effort. Members who want to influence issues directly affecting their lives, including pensions, job security, and health and safety, are encouraged to talk with their local president about becoming part of the Committee of 100. Members fighting for issues affecting their lives and schools is a proud tradition dating back to the mid-1970s, when a group of 100 local leaders came to Albany to fight for pension legislation. NYSUT strongly encourages each local to organize a political action team to meet with lawmakers, to be the core of letter-writing campaigns and to operate phone banks at school budget time and during the fall elections. This activity is coordinated by a network of political action members, one in each New York State Senatorial District.

The NYSUT Member Action Center, an online tool to connect a grassroots community of activists interested in education, health care and other issues affecting working people and families, also supports political action. Activists include classroom teachers, college and university faculty and professional staff, school bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, cafeteria workers, teacher assistants and aides, nurses, health care technicians, parents and more. All are dedicated to staying engaged, keeping informed and taking action on important issues. Visit the MAC at <http://mac.nysut.org>. Member support makes NYSUT’s political action the most effective voice in politics.



Your statewide union has a political fund-raising arm called VOTE-COPE. VOTE-COPE is NYSUT’s non-partisan action fund that coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and supports NYSUT-endorsed candidates and campaign committees that are pro-public-education and pro-labor. No NYSUT dues dollars are used to support candidates or campaign committees. NYSUT sends rebates to local unions based on a percentage (up to 40 percent) of the contributions VOTE-COPE receives from that local union’s members. Those rebates can be used in local activities such as school board races and for passage of school budgets. Ask your local president how to participate.





Registering to vote

We're a mobile society. The average NYSUT member moves several times in the course of his or her lifetime. Last year alone more than 50,000 NYSUT members switched residences.

One of the most important things to remember about moving is that it may affect your ability to exercise one of your most basic rights — the right to vote. NYSUT sends voter registration forms to new members and to individuals who have had a change of address. We encourage you to register to vote. We also think it's important to enroll in a political party — and it doesn't matter which one. Being involved in primary campaigns is often as important as voting in the general elections. You can get information online at www.elections.state.ny.us.

Voting in primary and general elections is essential to keeping our representative democracy healthy and strong. Volunteering to work in NYSUT phone banks and on political campaigns is critical if we are to exert influence beyond our classrooms, cafeterias and health care centers.

Voting on school budgets

Many of us live and work under the terms and conditions of employment bargained collectively with our public employer. It's important to support school district budgets and the programs and services we provide by being organized and showing support when the budgets come before the voters. We may not always work in the same school district we vote in, but voting to support school budgets helps each and every union member in your community. Our local unions frequently endorse candidates for election to local school boards. Be sure to support the pro-labor, pro-public-education candidates on the ballot. Great programs and services often begin in the ballot box.

Benchmark Polling Group

NYSUT has a full-time polling center that operates to gather information about our profession from those in the profession. We frequently poll members on Regents exams, the effects of higher standards, the state and condition of our schools and the affordability of higher education. We want to know what you are thinking as NYSUT members, and the Benchmark Polling Group is but one more way to listen to your concerns and desires.

The Benchmark Polling Group will never try to sell you anything. We are trying to assess from our members the current state of public education in New York and who, if anyone, you prefer to vote for in elective offices.

What every member should know about ...

The Board of Regents and State Education Department

New York’s Board of Regents sets education policy for the state. The rules and regulations it adopts have the force of law. The 17 Regents are elected to staggered five-year terms by a joint session of the state Legislature. NYSUT closely monitors the interview process used to select new Regents and to reappoint Regents to successive terms. NYSUT also maintains a voting record of each Regent on issues of importance, including private school vouchers, teacher certification requirements and high school graduation requirements.

The Regents’ scope of authority, the broadest of any such body in the nation, includes public and private elementary, secondary and higher education; the licensed professions, including medicine, nursing and accounting; libraries, museums and historical societies; and public television and radio stations. The Regents also appoint the commissioner of education, who serves at their pleasure. The commissioner is the chief executive officer of the State Education Department, which is the administrative arm of the Regents, and the president of the State University of New York.

NYSUT constantly interacts with the Regents and the SED on several levels and reviews and publishes fact sheets for the membership on issues being discussed by the Regents that affect NYSUT members’ professional lives. NYSUT also discusses with the board and individual Regents the impact of proposals on our members and their work in the classroom.

What every member should know about ...

Retirement and continuing NYSUT services NYSUT Retiree Services Program

NYSUT has one of the most active and successful union retiree programs in the country. The NYSUT Retiree Services Program, part of Program Services, was established by NYSUT to help its retirees organize and to act as a service provider for those retiree groups. In an effort to better serve the growing number of retirees, 11 retiree services consultants have been hired to serve members in the field.





The NYSUT Retiree Services Program provides printing, mailing and other communications services; plans, develops and coordinates regional membership conferences; provides support for retiree council meetings; provides communication and logistical support for lobbying activities and rallies; publishes a quarterly newsletter; answers post-retirement questions; and helps obtain speakers and programming for retiree councils and chapters.

The Teachers' Retirement System

It may seem odd to ask someone just beginning a career to think about retirement. But it is never too early, and information is available to help you make informed decisions and plan intelligently.

All public school teachers and teaching assistants in New York belong to the State Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), except those who teach in New York City and belong to the City Teachers' Retirement System. There are six retirement "tiers" within the TRS: Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 4, Tier 5 and Tier 6.

Your tier depends on when you first joined the retirement system. Under the existing Retirement & Social Security Law all teachers and teaching assistants who joined on or after Sept. 1, 1983, are in Tier 4.

All teachers and teaching assistants who joined on or after January 1, 2010, are in Tier 5, and all teacher and teaching assistants who joined on or after April 1, 2012, are Tier 6.

The minimum criteria to retire with full pension for Tier 4 members is 55 years of age and 30 years of service; you can retire with less service at a reduced pension. Tier 4 members are eligible to collect a pension, or vested in the retirement system, after achieving five years of service credit and are required to contribute 3 percent of their salaries until they have completed 10 years of service credit.

The minimum criteria to retire with a full pension for Tier 5 members of TRS is 57 years of age and 30 years of service; you can retiree with less service at a reduced pension. Tier 5 members of TRS are vested in the retirement system after achieving 10 years of service credit. They contribute 3.5 percent of their salaries for the life of their employment.

Tier 6 members can collect a full pension at age 63 and are vested in the retirement system after achieving 10 years of service credit. Tier 6 members contribute to the retirement system for the life of their employment. The amount Tier 6 members contribute is based on their salary and ranges between 3 and 6 percent.

Your employer also contributes; the rate fluctuates from year to year and is set each year by the TRS Board of Directors. Three members of this board are teachers. Questions from TRS members about retirement are addressed in a

column that appears in each issue of NYSUT's membership newsmagazine, *NYSUT United*. Your teacher-board representatives are available to answer questions and discuss NYSUT's efforts to improve your pension.

TRS publishes a Members' Handbook for all Tiers. Copies are online and available from the NYSTRS at 800-348-7298. In New York City, Mel Aronson, Sandra March and Mona Romain are three teacher-members of the New York City Retirement System Board. They can be reached at 212-598-9536.

New York City teachers and paraprofessionals who have questions about retirement can also call a pension representative in the borough offices of the United Federation of Teachers. The borough office numbers are:

Bronx: 718-379-6200

Brooklyn: 718-852-4900

Manhattan: 212-598-6800

Queens: 718-275-4400

Staten Island: 718-605-1400

Retirement System for Non-Instructional Employees

The benefits available for non-instructional employees depend on the school board's decision to participate in the New York State Employees' Retirement System. There is no law that requires them to do so, but if they elect to participate, the law precludes the establishment of any retirement system for a civil service employee other than the Employees' Retirement System (ERS). Permanent, 12-month, full-time employees must join the system.

Part-time employees have the option to join the system and are encouraged to do so. They should contact their district's business office.

Employees' contributions are paid into ERS by payroll deduction each payroll period. Employers' contributions to ERS are paid once each year upon receipt of a bill from the system.

Active ERS and TRS members who worked for a period of time with a public employer prior to joining, or rendered service in the U.S. Armed Forces, may be able to claim retirement credit for that service. Members are encouraged to contact their retirement system directly to determine their eligibility for this additional service credit and the process through which to obtain retirement credit.

Members who have retired from service, but want to return to public employment, may be able to do so without a diminution of their retirement benefits. Retired members who would like to return to public service are encouraged to contact the ERS or TRS directly for more information on the different options that are available.

Retirement for private-sector employees is a subject for negotiation. Members should consult their collective bargaining agreements and local leadership for information about retirement benefits available to them.



Teachers' Insurance Annuities Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) is available to members in public higher education who have the choice of joining TIAA-CREF (a defined-contribution benefit plan), the Employees' Retirement System (ERS), or the State Teachers' Retirement System (TRS). (The latter two are defined-benefit pension plans.)

What every member should know about ...

Member Benefits

Your NYSUT membership provides the value-added benefit of being able to participate in the more than 40 endorsed programs and services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits.

Choose from a variety of insurance, financial, legal, and shopping/travel/personal programs designed with the NYSUT member in mind — including term life insurance, auto insurance, legal and financial services, car rentals, vacation packages and discount programs. Whether you're looking to protect your family with insurance programs or simply enjoy a night out seeing the latest blockbuster film, Member Benefits is here for you!

And you can be assured that Member Benefits serves as your advocate for any of the Member Benefits-endorsed programs and services that you participate in. For more information or to receive detailed program information, please call 800-626-8101 to speak with a Member Benefits representative or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.

More about Member Benefits

In 1983, NYSUT created the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit trust fund for the purpose of providing members with access to competitive insurance plans and benefit programs.

In 2008, the Trustees of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust established the NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation, a for-profit corporation. This separate, taxable subsidiary was created not only to protect the Trust's tax-exempt status, but also to present the opportunity to expand the types of programs and services offered to members.

In addition to voluntary programs for individual members, Member Benefits also endorses group plans available for purchase by a local association, its benefit fund or employer.



No NYSUT dues dollars are used to support the trust or corporation. Member Benefits receives endorsement fees from some of the providers of its endorsed programs. Endorsement fees are used solely to defray the costs of administering the benefit programs of Member Benefits, including compensation, rent, office expenses, and the cost of retaining consultants, auditors and attorneys to advise the trustees, directors and staff. Where appropriate, Member Benefits revenue is also used to enhance the benefits available for participants.

No monies are paid to NYSUT except reimbursement for use of facilities and for services and personnel provided by NYSUT to, and at the request of, Member Benefits (certified annually to the trustees and directors by Member Benefits' independent auditors).

In an effort to provide only quality alternatives for members, a comprehensive process of reviewing and evaluating proposals from vendors is undertaken before an endorsement is given.

Once a program is granted the NYSUT Member Benefits endorsement, staff and consultants regularly monitor the programs for participation, member satisfaction, utilization and product competitiveness.

One of the biggest advantages of an endorsement is Member Benefits' advocacy role. If you ever encounter a problem with any endorsed program, please contact Member Benefits immediately. Member Benefits' involvement in this type of situation assures that your needs can be addressed in a timely manner.

NYSUT Member Benefits does not represent that its endorsed benefit programs are the lowest-cost products. Member Benefits trustees, directors, staff, consultants and advisers are committed to obtaining and maintaining quality benefit programs at competitive prices. Members are encouraged to shop and compare before purchasing any benefit program.

Many of these endorsed programs come with a "free-look" trial period, giving you ample time to review your new plan. If not completely satisfied, return your certificate of coverage within the allotted time frame and any money you've paid or had deducted will be refunded in full.

Although some endorsed programs may provide legal or financial advice, Member Benefits itself does not offer investment, legal





or tax advice. Participants are urged to consult their own investment, financial, tax, and legal advisers to help them with an evaluation of the benefit programs.

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses the following programs:

Insurance: Term Life; Level Term Life; Wrap-Plan® II Universal Life; Personal Property/Liability (auto, home, renters, boat, umbrella, etc.); Disability; Catastrophe Major Medical; Long-Term Care; Vision Plan; Dental Plan; and Pet Insurance.

Financial and Legal: Financial Counseling Program; Synchrony Bank Savings Program; ID Watchdog; ClearPoint Credit Counseling Solutions; and Legal Service Plan.

Shopping/Travel/Personal: Abenity Discounts; Office Depot/OfficeMax; 1800Flowers.com; Premier World Discovery; Orlando Employee Discounts; Car and Truck Rentals; Wyndham Hotels and Endless Vacation Rentals; Grand Circle Travel; AFT Magazine Subscription Services; Powell's Books; Bose; American Solar Partners; Heat USA; Propane.Pro; Tunstall Medical Alert; EPIC Hearing Service Plan; and Online Defensive Driving.

NYSUT Member Benefits offers the following educational workshops and other services:

Workshops: Identity Theft/Fraud; 403(b) Basics; 403(b) Employer Contributions; Inside the 403(b); 403(b) Provider-Specific; The Challenging Times of Financial Management – The Retirement Years; Payroll/Pension (in retirement) Deduction of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs; Estate Planning and more. Workshops are arranged by a request from local associations.

Other Services: MAP (Member Alert Program) Alert email service; MPP (My Program Participation); Payroll/Pension Deduction; 403(b) Field Guide; 401(k) Consumer Guide; Member Benefits E-Direct Newsletter; and Online Financial Planning Center.

To request more information about any of these programs or services, or to find out if any additional programs are available, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org. Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.



NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS
MAP
MEMBER ALERT PROGRAM



What every member should know about ...

NYSUT Program Services Great strength in great diversity

NYSUT members work together every day to ensure that New York’s schools, colleges and health care systems meet the needs of the state’s residents. The Program Services department gives a voice to the union’s many constituencies, providing them with resources and services designed to meet their unique needs ranging from direct member access with social services, to assistance for constituency groups, to professional development conferences.

Programs and services

The department’s resources are dedicated to a broad variety of topics and constituencies:

- School-Related Professionals
- Retiree Services
- Health and Safety
- Civil and Human Rights
- Health Care Professionals
- Small and Rural Locals
- Health Insurance
- NYSUT Social Services
- Statewide Leadership Conferences
- Community outreach
- First Book programs



NYSUT Social Services

Also under the umbrella of Program Services is NYSUT Social Services, a valuable benefit available to you. It requires no additional membership or cost and is completely confidential.

Social Services staff can provide you and your family with a safety net to cope with life’s challenges. When you call, one of the staff will consult with you regarding your concerns, and provide well-researched resources, information and referrals for services available in your community. Please contact Social Services at 800-342-9810, ext. 6206, or e-mail socsvcs@nysutmail.org.

What every member should know about ...

NYSUT Communications and Publications

A commitment to spread the union message

NYSUT places a premium on the ability to communicate clearly and in a timely manner, with local leaders, members, public officials, the external media and our sisters and brothers in the labor movement.

Through proactive use of print, video, radio and the Web, the union provides accurate up-to-the-minute information.

NYSUT United and www.nysut.org

NYSUT's newsmagazine, *NYSUT United*, comes to every member's door several times a year with workplace and career-related information and analysis you won't find anywhere else. The magazine carries news about union action at the local, state and national level. Feature and news stories bring attention to teachers, School Related Professionals, health care professionals and retirees on issues of social justice, professional development, changing policies in education and health care, the labor movement and legislative action.

The union's website, www.nysut.org, offers timely updates on education, health care and labor news, and resources you can use: brochures, posters, videos and more. NYSUT is also a strong presence on TV, radio and other media.

Members who take part in community outreach projects locally and globally — from working at a soup kitchen to building wells in third-world countries are recognized at www.nysut.org/itswhatwedo.

For quick checks into news and stories, visit facebook.com/nysutunited; twitter.com/nysut or other social media sites.



Stay Connected!



www.nysut.org

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flickr.com/photos/nysut

blogs.nysut.org

www.storify.com/nysut

<http://www.nysut.org/itswhatwedo>

<https://mac.nysut.org>

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Fax: 716-634-4731

271 Porter Ave.
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Phone: 716-881-5400

**We stand. We
fight. We win.
Together.**



GIVE TO VOTE **COPE**

VOTE-COPE is NYSUT's political action fund. VOTE-COPE solicits and accepts only voluntary contributions. Contributions to VOTE-COPE are not tax deductible.



nysut
A Union of Professionals

Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education, human services and health care.

www.nysut.org

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