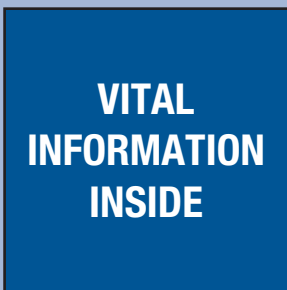


What every NYSUT member should know



What Every NYSUT Member Should Know



A handbook of
helpful information
from



Revised 2010

From the Officers

This booklet is a reference source for important information about your profession and your union. Go to www.nysut.org to find even more useful information, advice, tips, news and helpful resources. Your union is always at your side.

In solidarity,

Richard C. Iannuzzi
President

Andrew Pallotta
Executive Vice President

Maria Neira
Vice President

Kathleen M. Donahue
Vice President

Lee Cutler
Secretary-Treasurer



Iannuzzi



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Welcome to NYSUT

NYSUT is a federation of approximately 1,300 local unions representing more than 600,000 people 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 and county professionals, 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 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 one of its national affiliates, the American Federation of Teachers. Retirees can join NYSUT's other national affiliate, the National Education Association, for a one-time fee.

This book provides new members with an overview of NYSUT. While much of the information relates to issues of concern to 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 your local's membership. Their terms vary according to local constitutions. These delegates elect the five NYSUT statewide officers and a 79-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 of the Board meets monthly. 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. In addition to special task forces, 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.

Among the standing committees and task forces 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, Task Force on Education Policy, Educational Technology, Health & Safety, Special Education, Early Childhood, English Language Learners and Teacher Centers. NYSUT also has 11 statewide committees to recommend positions and directions to the organization in regard to the standards and assessments in PreK-12 schools. These committees help NYSUT provide a professional response to Regents’ initiatives.

Staff

NYSUT employs more than 500 people at its Albany headquarters and in 16 regional offices to carry out union programs and to serve affiliates and members. Every local is assigned a 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 through 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, Special Olympics, United Way and the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition, 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 did not exist in New York until the Legislature enacted the Taylor Law in 1967, and it does not exist today for school employees in 18 other states. Private-sector members are covered under the National Labor Relations Act, which likewise gives private-sector members the right to be organized, represented and to bargain collectively.

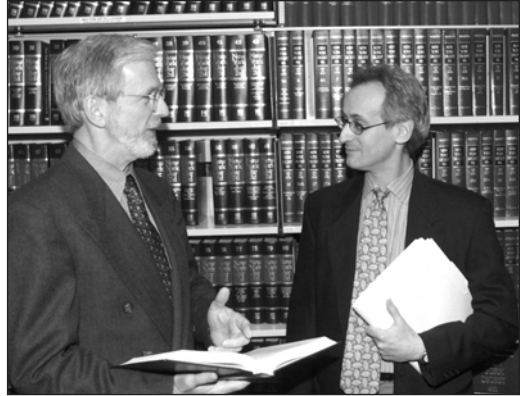
The Taylor Law

Before the Taylor Law was enacted, public employees in New York had no 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. Its provisions include:

- ❑ 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 resolution of contract disputes (impasses);
- ❑ Prohibition of improper labor practices by either side;
- ❑ Creation of the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) 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 to which the agency fee payer objects is subject to a rebate procedure.

While the Taylor Law grants public employees the right to collective bargaining, it denies them 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, a 1982 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 and labor classes with less than five years service 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 (LRS) 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 (PERB) and, for private sector members, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). He or she works with the local affiliate in the capacity of consultant, communicator, trainer and facilitator to resolve local issues.

NYSUT maintains a staff of full-time attorneys to assist locals and members facing job-related problems. When necessary, depending on availability, the merits of a particular matter and other factors, these attorneys have 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 has a strong commitment to meaningful and appropriate professional development for teachers throughout their careers. The union was instrumental in the passage of regulations that require school districts to provide professional development to teachers. NYSUT provides and supports a wide variety of resources to enhance the learning of new teachers. These resources are accessible through your local teachers union by contacting your building representative or union officers. You can also find resources at www.nysut.org.

- **Master's Degrees through NYSUT Partnership Programs**
- **State-Mandated Mentoring for New Teachers**
- **Graduate or In-service Courses Through NYSUT**
- **Programs for School-Related Professionals**
- **Professional Development Workshops through NYSUT**
- **NYS Teacher Centers**
- **National Board Certification**
- **NYSUT Subject Area Committees**
- **NYSUT Department of Research and Educational Services**

NYSUT Education & Learning Trust Master's Degree Partnership Programs

The NYSUT Education & Learning Trust (ELT) has partnered with accredited colleges and universities in New York to provide teachers access to quality programs at reasonable costs. These partnerships allow ELT to offer courses that feed into state-approved graduate programs in education and the liberal arts and sciences. Teachers may use these programs to fulfill the graduate degree requirement for professional certification. Contact the Trust at 800-528-6208 or ELTmail@nysutmail.org.

State-Mandated Mentoring for New Teachers

As of February 2004, school districts and BOCES are required to provide a mentored experience to initial and transitional certificate holders during their first year of teaching. If a teacher has had at least two years of teaching prior to service in a public school under an initial certificate, the teacher is exempt from the requirement. A superintendent's verification is required for professional certification. Ask your building representative about this support program.

Graduate or In-service Courses through NYSUT

NYSUT, through the Education & Learning Trust, provides its members access to professional development courses for either graduate or in-service credit. Courses address topics such as classroom management and discipline, literacy, special education and inclusive classrooms, and working with diverse learners. All courses are taught by practicing teachers specifically trained in these areas and are offered at affordable tuition rates. Contact the Trust at 800-528-6208 or ELTmail@nysutmail.org.

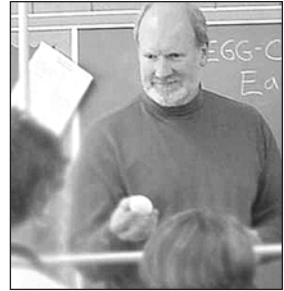
Programs for School-Related Professionals (SRPs)

NYSUT, through the Education & Learning Trust, offers education and training opportunities for SRPs that can enhance their skills and knowledge and improve overall job performance. Workshop offerings 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. Undergraduate courses are also available to help teaching assistants meet certification requirements. Contact the Trust at 800-528-6208 or at ELTmail@nysutmail.org.

Professional Development Workshops through NYSUT

NYSUT, through the Education & Learning Trust, provides professional development workshops for its members. Several workshops, such as Classroom Management, are specifically designed for new teachers and are accessible by contacting the union building representative or union officers. These workshops can be delivered in any school across New York and can be used to fulfill state-mandated continuing education requirements. Contact the Trust 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 including certification. The department regularly conducts member phone surveys and publishes Information Bulletins and Briefing Bulletins on emerging educational issues from pre-K through post-grad. This information can be found at the NYSUT Web site, www.nysut.org, by clicking on the Information Bulletins link. This NYSUT department sponsors statewide and regional meetings and conferences.

Certification

Certification is a requirement for continued employment as a teacher or teaching assistant in a public school district or BOCES in New York state, 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, visit the Office of Teaching Initiatives Web site at www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/. 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 happen to 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.

NYS Teacher Centers

NYSUT strongly supports the network of 132 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 which 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 teachers. When teachers are actively engaged in learning more about content and instructional skills, more students are likely to achieve the high standards of performance required in

New York state. For more, go to NYSUT's Information Bulletin on Teacher Centers, or www.teachercenters.org.

National Board Certification

Offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Board Certification calls for documentation of a candidate's teaching practice and content knowledge over time as measured against high and rigorous standards. It is a way for teachers to deepen subject matter knowledge and become more skillful in daily classroom instruction and student assessment. The credentials attest "that a teacher has been assessed by his or her peers as one who is accomplished, makes sound professional judgments about student learning and acts effectively with those judgments." The NYSUT Education & Learning Trust offers workshops and courses to assist members pursuing national certification.

National Board Certification is voluntary and complements, but does not replace, state licensing. Teachers with three (3) or more years of experience are eligible to apply. A National Board Certificate is valid for 10 years and is renewable. Currently the participation fee is \$2,565, including a \$65 non-refundable processing fee, but candidate fee subsidies are available through the NYS Albert Shanker Grant Program. At present, more than 180 NYSUT locals have negotiated incentives for participants and New York state's National Board Certified Teachers. For more information, go to www.nysut.org/nbpts.

NYSUT Statewide Committees

With the changes to standards, assessments and curriculum, NYSUT established content area committees to assist the Board of Directors in developing policy regarding the New York State Learning Standards and Assessments. 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 families 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, BOCES, 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 workshops 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. This includes the AFT's Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) training, a professional development program. 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.

Be sure to check the NYSUT Web site (www.nysut.org/elt) for courses and workshops offered through the Education & Learning Trust.

What every member should know about ...

Political Action

NYSUT is the most influential and successful lobbying group in New York. We work on behalf of students and professionals in education, health care and other member constituency groups in New York to improve public education and to protect the rights of members to practice their professions. 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.

In 2010, 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 also lobbies state and federal representatives to help retain professional enhancements we fought for and won. Additional 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 cam-



paigns 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. 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. The single largest category of VOTE-COPE expenditures is in the form of rebates to local unions to be used in local activities such as school board races and for passage of school budgets. Last year, your colleagues contributed more than \$7 million to VOTE-COPE. 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

So many of us live and work under the terms and conditions of employment collectively bargained 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, 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 State Education Department on several levels and reviews and publishes informational bulletins to 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. The push for higher Regents standards is an example of this interactive effort. NYSUT is working to ensure that the Regents' efforts produce a teachable program that results in improved student achievement. NYSUT created nine subject area committees made up of classroom practitioners from around the state to analyze and respond to changes in academic content and assessment and to advise NYSUT on how the union can help members deal with the changes.

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 now 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 four retirement "Tiers" within the TRS: Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4. Your tier depends on when you first joined the retirement system. All teachers and teaching assistants who joined on or after Sept. 1, 1983, are in Tier 4, which was established by Article 15 of the State Retirement and Social Security Law. The minimum criteria to retire with full pension are 55 years of age and 30 years of service; you can retire with less service at a reduced pension.

The law requires that members in Tiers 3 and 4 contribute 3 percent of their salaries until they have 10 years of membership in a public retirement system. 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 bi-weekly membership newspaper, *New York Teacher*. Your teacher-board representatives are available

to answer questions and discuss NYSUT's efforts to improve your pension. You may contact them as follows:

Sheila Salenger

at NYSUT headquarters
Phone: 800-342-9810 or 518-213-6000
Fax: 518-213-6409



Paul Farfaglia

Phone: 315-431-4040



Michael Corn

Phone: 315-735-8421
or at the NYSUT Utica Regional Office
Phone: 315-768-0131
Fax: 315-768-1360



TRS publishes a Members' Handbook for all Tiers, 1-5. Copies are 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 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 members in the ERS who worked for a period of time with a public employer prior to joining the ERS or rendered service in the U.S. Armed Forces during a conflict may be able to claim retirement credit for that service. Members are encouraged to contact the ERS directly to determine their eligibility for this additional service credit and the process through which to obtain retirement credit.

Members of the ERS 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 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.) TIAA-CREF also is known as "the optional retirement plan."



What every member should know about ...

Member Benefits

In 1983, NYSUT created 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 NYSUT Member Benefits Trust established the NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation, a for-profit corporation. This separate, taxable subsidiary was created to protect the Trust's tax-exempt status. It presents 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 the Corporation. Member Benefits receives endorsement fees from some of the providers of its endorsed programs. For information, call Member Benefits, refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description, or visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org. 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 (the reasonableness of which amounts are certified annually to the trustees and directors by Member Benefits' independent auditors).

In efforts to provide only quality alternatives for members, a 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 monitor the programs regularly for participation, member satisfaction, utilization and product competitiveness. One advantage of endorsement is Member Benefits' advocacy role. If you ever encounter a problem with any endorsed program, please notify Member Benefits. Our involvement in this type of situation assures your needs are addressed in a timely manner.

NYSUT Member Benefits does not represent that our 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. We encourage you to shop and compare before purchasing any benefit program.

Most of our endorsed plans come with a “free look” trial period. This gives you ample time to review your new plan. If you’re not completely satisfied, you can 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 these programs:

Insurance: Term Life; WrapPlanSM II Flexible Premium Adjustable Life Insurance; Personal Property/Liability (auto, home, renters, boat, umbrella, etc.); Disability; Accidental Death and Dismemberment; Catastrophe Major Medical; Long-Term Care; Vision Plan; In-Service Dental Plan.

Financial and Legal: Preferred Savings PlusSM (Money Markets, High Yield Savings and CDs); Equifax Credit WatchTM Gold; Consumer Credit Counseling Service; Legal Service Plan.

Discounts: EPIC Hearing Service Plan; Powell’s Books; OfficeMax Retail ConnectSM; Bose[®]; Dell Computers; Barnes & Noble.com; Working Advantage (tickets); Philips Lifeline; car and truck rentals; Six Flags; The Buyer’s Edge buying service; Heat USA.

NYSUT Member Benefits offers these **educational workshops and other services:**

Workshops: Defensive Driving; Identity Theft/Fraud; 403(b) Basics; 403(b) Employer Contributions; 403(b) Regulations Overview; Inside the 403(b); Unraveling the Mysteries of Credit and Credit Reports; Payroll Deduction of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs; Estate Planning and more. Workshops are arranged by request from local associations.

Other Services: MAP (Member Assistance Program); MPP (My Program Participation); payroll deduction; consumer guides; MetDESK (MetLife’s Division of Estate Planning for Special Kids).

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

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 — which distributes this booklet — gives a voice to the union's many constituencies, providing them with resources and services designed to meet their unique needs.

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
- New Members
- Health Care Professionals
- Small and Rural Locals
- Health Insurance
- Closing Achievement Gaps

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 charge 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 resource information and referrals 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, 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 new newsmagazine, *NYSUT United*, comes to every member's door 11 times a year with workplace and career-related information and analysis you won't find anywhere else.

The union's Web site, 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.

REGIONAL OFFICES

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LONG ISLAND — SUFFOLK

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Fax: 631-273-6186

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NORTH COUNTRY — WATERTOWN

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30 N. Union St. — Suite 302
Rochester, NY 14607
Phone: 585-454-5550
Fax: 585-454-7711

SOUTHERN TIER — ELMIRA

100 West Church St. — Suite 200
Elmira, NY 14901-2720
Phone: 607-732-1928
Fax: 607-734-3371

SOUTHERN TIER — VESTAL

305 Vestal Parkway West
Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 607-786-5742
Fax: 607-786-5749

SOUTHWESTERN NEW YORK

1 West Oak Hill Road
Jamestown, NY 14701
Phone: 716-664-7425
Fax: 716-487-1727

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4983 Brittonfield Parkway
P.O. Box 247
East Syracuse, NY 13057
Phone: 315-431-4040
Fax: 315-431-4411

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520 White Plains Road, Suite 400
Tarrytown, NY 10591
Phone: 914-592-4411
Fax: 914-345-3302

UTICA Area

7 Ellinwood Court
New Hartford, NY 13413-1105
Phone: 315-768-0131
Fax: 315-768-1360

WESTERN NEW YORK

Centerpointe Corporate Park
270 Essjay Road
Williamsville, NY 14221-8276
Phone: 716-634-7132
Fax: 716-634-4731
and
271 Porter Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14201
Phone: 716-884-1115



Member Benefits Endorses:

**Insurance Programs
Legal & Financial Services
Discount Programs
Other Services**

With the group buying power represented by more than 600,000 members, we're able to offer quality products and services that are competitively priced. Visit our Web site or call us today to find out more!

To request more information, please call:

800-626-8101

Visit us on the Web at:

www.memberbenefits.nysut.org

Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.

**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You

3 Facts

Every New NYSUT Member Should Know ...

Fact #1 Close to 90% of disability accidents and illnesses are not work related*

Fact #2 In the last 10 minutes 498 Americans became disabled*

Fact #3 71% of American employees live paycheck to paycheck**

If you can't work ... how will your bills get paid?

As a new NYSUT member, you're eligible to apply for the ***NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Disability Plan.***

- Discounted NYSUT member rates
- Three plan options
- Designed to cover up to 60% of monthly income subject to policy limits
- 1st day hospitalization daily benefit payment - 15 day maximum
- Accidental death & dismemberment benefit
- Convenient payment options



Underwriter: Unimerica Life Insurance Company of New York, One Penn Plaza 8th Floor, New York, NY 10119-0899

For more information, call ...

1-800-515-2471

Mon. thru Fri., 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., ET.

www.memberbenefits.nysut.org

The Unimerica Life Insurance Company of New York Disability Plan is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an expense reimbursement arrangement of 5% of gross premiums for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering the 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 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 Insurance Department. The expected benefit ratio for this policy is 66.8%. This ratio is the portion of future premiums which the company expects to return as benefits, when averaged over all people with this policy.

*National Safety Council, Injury Facts 2008 Ed.

**American Payroll Association, "Getting Paid In America" Survey, 2008

Careers in Education



NYSUT's online Career Center provides:



- Links for education jobs throughout New York state



- Information on how to prepare
- Tips for transitioning mid-career



- Inspiration and advice

WWW.NYSUT.ORG



You can complete the puzzle!

VOTE-COPE is the Voice of Teachers for Education - Committee on Political Education, the non-partisan political action arm of New York State United Teachers and its affiliates. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members, VOTE-COPE is used to help union-backed candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor.

Please give to VOTE-COPE!

nysut
A Union of Professionals

vote
COPE

We are here to help ...

One facet of the NYSUT mission statement is to improve the personal lives of its members and their families. NYSUT Social Services is a valuable benefit available to you. There is no charge, no limitation on usage and is completely confidential. We provide you and your family with a personal response to your unique issue.



A helping hand for life

Call NYSUT Social Services
(800) 342-9810, ext. 6206

socsvcs@nysutmail.org

Scott Hicks, LCSW

Laurie Kupperstein, MS

Ani Shahinian, LCSW-R



*Problems come in many forms.
So does the help NYSUT provides.*



Richard C. Iannuzzi, *President*

Andrew Pallotta, *Executive Vice President*

Maria Neira, *Vice President*

Kathleen M. Donahue, *Vice President*

Lee Cutler, *Secretary-Treasurer*

**Representing more than 600,000
professionals in education and health care**

www.nysut.org

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