

SYOSSET RECORD

RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER, (REC)

SYOSSET TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

NYSUT #19-090R

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President's Message

Although we are already in February I still would like to wish you all a Happy New Year 2026 because there is no time limit to good wishes. The weather has been a little chilly for us and for some in states which are unused to cold winters. Still we were happy to join in the warmth of friends at our December luncheon at Angelina's. A big thank you is extended to Katherine Kovins for her work in arranging for the event. We were so pleased to see our friends and colleagues and share our stories. Now we'll look forward to our June luncheon..



NYS Proposed Executive Budget

Governor Kathy Hochul presented her Executive Budget in January. The budget proposal includes a number of NYSUT initiatives such as funding school meals for every child and investments in early childhood education. The following are some highlights of the governor's proposal as presented in the Fiscal Year Executive Budget Briefing Book.

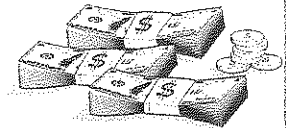
- Provides \$39.3 billion in total School Aid for School Year (SY) 2027.
- An increase of \$779 million in Foundation Aid driven by continued full funding.
- Funding for universal Pre-K for Four-Year-Olds by SY 2029
- An increase of \$561 million for universal Pre-K Aid in SY 2027
- Proposes \$340 million to fund universal

free meals for all districts that participate in the National Free School Meals (UFSM) program.

- Supports public libraries by providing \$104.7 million in Library Aid and \$34 million for Library Construction to fund various capital projects.
 - Provides \$244 million in new state support for SUNY and CUNY four-year campuses.
 - Includes \$12.5 million for Community Colleges to expand the New York State Opportunity Promise Scholarship program to additional high-demand fields.
 - Operating support for SUNY Downstate Hospital of \$100 million
 - Additional support of \$195 million for charter school supplemental tuition
- Of particular concern are a number of significant omissions in the Governor's Executive Budget including:

- The eliminations of funding for Teacher Centers
- No additional funding for Community Schools
- Elimination of reimbursement for IRMAA (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). IRMAA is the additional Medicare B premium that some retirees are required to pay. By not including this reim-

(Cont'd on p. 2)



Presidents' Message *(cont'd from p. 1)*

bursement in the budget would cost retirees hundred to thousands of dollars annually.

- No adjustment to the annual pension COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment). The base amount used to calculate the adjustment needs to be updated to better reflect the rising costs of goods and services.

Know Your Rights Videos

To help members better understand some of the federal and New York State laws protecting them in the workplace, the NYSUT Office of General Council offers a series of videos, **Know Your Rights**, on topics that are important to our members. Understanding one's rights as an educator has become

more crucial than ever.

The video series includes the following: Know Your Rights on Academic Freedom , Free Speech, Women's Rights, LGBTQ+ Issues, Banned and Challenged Books, Immigration Enforcement Action, and Online Harassment. This foundation of legal literacy helps educators make informed decisions about curriculum content, classroom discussions and their role as public employees. To access the videos go to nysut.org/KYR.

Please check for updates and information about REC/STA activities on STA's website <https://syossetta.org> then REC.

Stay well,
Matty

Political Action

- A phone bank to continue the fight against charter schools was held on February 23 from 1:00 p.m.-6:00p.m. at NYSUT Nassau Regional Headquarters. NYSUT has filed a lawsuit in Albany County Supreme Court to hold the State University of New York Charter School Institute accountable for its decision to authorize new charter schools in Brentwood and Central Islip , despite rejection by the State Education Department and opposition from local communities. The New York State Board of Regents and the New York State PTA have filed affirmations in support of NYSUT's litigations.
- VOTE-COPE is NYSUT's political fund-raising arm. It is a non-partisan, voluntary political action fund that coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and supports candidates endorsed by NYSUT and campaign committees that are pro-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%) of the contributions VOTE-COPE receives from that local union's members, including retirees. These rebates are used for local activities such as school board races and for passage of school budgets. To contribute online go to nysut.org VOTE-COPE. Log in to MyNYSUT to give.

- The NYSUT Member Action Center (MAC) is an online tool to connect a community of activists interested in education, healthcare, and other issues affecting working people and families. You can use the NYSUT MAC App on your smartphone to quickly and easily take action on important issues and legislation impacting our inservice colleagues as well as retiree benefits.

At Our December Luncheon



One of the delights of getting together for our luncheons is the opportunity to learn more about what's going on in each other's lives. In December **Jody Bassuk** announced that she is now a grandmother . . . her daughter, Erica, gave birth to grandson, Lucas, in August. **Lori Pomerantz** also has a new grandchild. Owen Banks is her fourth grandson. Lori and **Paula Kraus** are both planning "bucket list" trips this summer. Lori will be off to Japan and Paula is planning a trip to Wales. Paula noted that concluding her first decade as a retiree, she just assumed a position at the Greenvale School and also works as a student teacher supervisor for Oneonta. **Pam Harris** told us about her passion for creating collages using magazines, newspapers, and found materials. She'll be part of a three-woman show at BAFFA in Sayville this August.

Important Reminder

In order to receive reimbursement for Medicare premiums please remember to send a copy of your 2025 SSA-1099 and the notarized attestation form that was sent to you by the district. The Benefits Department indicates that checks are expected to be mailed to us prior to the end of June and will include Part B copay reimbursement (including applicable IRMAA fees) but Part D (prescription coverage) copays are not reimbursed. The required paperwork should be to: Syosset Central School District, ATT: Member Benefits, P.O. Box 9029, Syosset, NY 11791

District Honors

- Niche, a nationwide school rating agency, has cited the Syosset Central School District as #1 in New York State and #2 in its national rankings. In *Pulse*, High School Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante noted that this honor “reflected . . . Syosset’s living legacy: exceptional teachers, ambitious students and a community wired for excellence.”
- Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society is a new branch of the national organization started at Syosset High School by history teachers Dr. Laura Wenger and Mr. Martin Connell. Rho Kappa is intended for students who are interested in history and in giving back to their community.
- Three Syosset students have been recognized as semi-finalists in Regeneron’s Science Talent Search. Elaine Liu’s project focuses on “The Effects of Apology Strategies on the Spread and Intensity of Cancel Culture Incidents.” Grace Liu studied “Gender Disparities in Entrepreneurial Decision-Making Under Uncertainty” and Nikhil Shah’s work was on: Examining the Effects of Guideline Application on Racial Disparity in Federal Sentencing.”
- From the Syosset CSD website about DECA (Distributive Education Club of America) which focuses on marketing, finance, hospitality and management: Syosset DECA was among just 1,188 chapters that achieved *Thrive Level* recognition during the 2025-2026 school year and will be commended at DECA’s International Career Development Conference (ICDC). Thrive Level is the highest level of chapter recognition. . . . In DECA’s Community Service Campaign, chapters held

community service activities, engaged at least 75% of their members and created promotions for their efforts. Syosset High School DECA organized a Paws of War fundraiser and a Flag Fundraiser in partnership with the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization, as well as a Thanksgiving food drive and holiday toy drive. The chapter also participated in Syosset High School’s Relay for Life event. “Earning the Thrive Level Award is a testament to the hard work and passion of our members. Syosset DECA continues to set a high standard for excellence, and this recognition is well deserved,” said Danielle Garrison, Chapter Advisor.

Our Sympathy

We mourn the passing of our colleague **Elizabeth Kappstatter** who passed away in February 2025 just two weeks before her 102nd birthday.



REC-STA Executive Board

Presidents - Matty Wolfson

Vice Pres. - Carol Voelger

Rec. Secretary - Jody Bassuk

Corr. Secretary - Sue Devine, Joanne Gulotta

Treasurer - Debra Puccio

Care Committee— Mary Ann Marriott

Health Insurance -Barbara La Valle

Legislation - Pat Galaskas

Membership - Pat Galaskas

Newsletter Editor - Marcia Gould

Programs & Special Events—
volunteer needed

School/Community - volunteer needed

Social Wellness/Hospitality -

Katherine Kovins, Barbara LaValle

Vote-Cope - Jody Bassuk