



### Officers

**President:** Joseph Becker

**1st Vice President:** Jenny McElroy

**2nd Vice President:** Carol Brown

**Recording Secretary:** Maura Brady-Wilson

**Corresponding Social Secretary:** Lindsay Wylie

**Treasurer:** Walter Kaufmann

**Grievance Chairperson:** Jacqueline Behnke

## Happenings May 2025

Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT #2937, AFL-CIO

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Memorial Day weekend and enjoyed the added bonus of having Friday off. As we enter the final stretch and the busiest time of the year with field trips, exams, graduations, banquets, and so on, I would like to thank everyone who participated in PAC this year. Whether you were involved in the interview process, phone banking, or both, your time and commitment are truly appreciated. Please consider

participating in this process next year. Moreover, I was very happy to see the budget and referendums passed with ease- allowing for our district to continue to make positive strides.

**Important Update on UPK Program Eligibility:** The district office recently shared important updates with PTJA regarding the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program, and we want to ensure our members are informed as soon as possible. According to the district office, we want to inform our valued staff that, beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, the district will no longer be able to offer universal pre-k (UPK) spots to the preschool-aged children of employees residing outside the Port Jervis School District.

This change is due to specific state funding guidelines for UPK, which tie enrollment eligibility directly to the child's residency within the district. We understand this may affect some of our members and appreciate your understanding as we work within the program's parameters.

Please know that we will continue to welcome and support our staff members' school-aged children, residing both in and out of the district, at all other grade levels K-12.

**Summer School:** For those signed up for summer school, please be sure to communicate with your administrator if you will be attending one of the two “optional” set-up days. In this context, optional means if you work, you will get paid and if you choose not to work, you will lose one day's pay for summer school. Both Elementary and Secondary “optional” set-up day choices are June 27th or June 30th.

**End of the Year Party:** As of today, we have had a low number of members RSVP'd for the [EOY party](#). Remember this is not just to recognize the retirees, it is to celebrate everyone's school year. The date is June 20th and the party starts at 2:30-5:00 at the Tiki Bar and then onto the trackside from 5:00-9:00. If you have not already RSVP'd to attend this event to celebrate the year, please consider doing so by filling out the [attached form](#). All are welcome. Please RSVP by June 5th and send \$55.00 to Lindsay Wylie. Reach out to Lindsay if you have any questions.

**Constitution Amendments:** An email was sent out on May 13th for constitutional amendments. As explained, they must sit for 30 days prior to a vote by the reps assembly, and then if passed a vote will happen with the general membership. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out.

In solidarity,

Joe Becker  
PJTA President

### **Important Updates:**

**Scholarship Committee:** The committee met on April 24, 2025 and scholarship winners were selected. They will be announced at the Scholarship Night held on June 12 at 6:00 pm.

- Next year's scholarship will be submitted both on paper and electronically to verify the essay with an AI authenticator.
- The End of the Year Happy Hour will have basket raffles to benefit the PJTA Scholarship Fund. See a building Scholarship Committee member to contribute to your building's basket requests.
- Next year's apparel sale will start in September. If you have any ideas for new items, please let Carol Brown know at [cbrown@pjschools.org](mailto:cbrown@pjschools.org).

**Sick Bank:** A member was approved for up to 20 days. The member will pay back half of the days used from the bank.

**Benefit Fund:** The Trustees met on 5/20/25 to discuss the plan changes for next year. Kathryn Helms has been appointed as a trustee for a three-year term beginning on July 1.

### **Vision and Dental Information:**

A few reminders:

- The 2-year vision cycle ends on June 30, 2025.
- ALL claims should be mailed to PO Box 95, Port Jervis, NY 12771.
- Pre-authorization requests **MUST** be submitted with a pre-xray attached.
- For Open Enrollment read the details below:
  - If you wish to **change** your **PTJA Benefit Fund Coverage** (Dental and Vision Care) from Individual to Dependent (Family) or from Dependent (Family) to Individual effective with the 2025-2026 play year, **OR** if you wish either to elect coverage or to opt out of coverage (Dental and/or Vision Care) effective with the 2025-2026 play year, send a letter indicating the desired change:

PJTA Benefit Fund Administrator  
P. O. Box #95  
Port Jervis, NY 12771

If you have questions regarding coverage(s), write to the fund administrator or contact a trustee.

Even if you have mentioned or discussed a change in coverage during the current year, your written request for a coverage change must be received at the fund office by June 30, 2025 for any coverage change to be effective for the July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 plan year.

\*Remember to inform the Fund Office of any "changes in status." This includes, but is not limited to marriage, divorce, change of address, and COLLEGE GRADUATION.

The annual non-pro-rated co-payment for dependent (family) coverage for the 2025-2026 plan year is \$200.00.

\*Please note when your request for a change of coverage is received, you will be sent the appropriate form(s) to be returned. Coverage will not begin until all forms have been received.

### Upcoming Meetings:

- PTJA: **6/16 @ 3:45** pm in the HS library or attend virtually. President Joe Becker will send out a link prior to each meeting.
- Board of Education: **6/17 @ 7:00 pm** in the HS Cafeteria: *Retiree Reception/Top 20 Seniors*

### Correspondence:

#### **Cards sent:**

Nick Miller- on the loss of his father, Earl Miller  
Elena Keefer- on the loss of her uncle, Earl Miller  
Jenny Garrity Siegel & Mike Siegel- congratulating them on their wedding



#### **Cards received:**

Thank you cards/emails received from the following secretaries:

Patrick Brady  
Adista Theodore  
Jackie Smith  
Maryann Hull  
Jeanne Wilkowski  
Nicole VanBenschoten  
Tammy Mackin  
Nathalie Perry  
Michele Reiley  
Kristen Lopez  
Bonnie Whitney  
Debbie Rutt  
Kendyll Henion  
Jenn Maillet  
Jerianne Baumgardner  
Jessica Ellsworth  
Amy Acoveno  
Cecilia Rough  
Jeanmarie Schields

Thank you cards/emails regarding congratulating tenure recipients:  
Peggy Fitzgerald

## **NYSUT News:**

NYSUT's strength as well as its pride is in the diversity of its membership. That is why the union is proud to offer a wide array of programs, services, and information that address its members' unique interests and issues.

### **Member Programs, Services, and Information:**

- **Member Guide**
- **Political Action**
- **Program Services**
- **Member Benefits**

### **NYSTRS Retirement Information:** Thinking About Retirement?

Retirement is a significant life event. Be sure to do the homework necessary to make informed decisions by reviewing publications, web pages, and videos early in the process.

- **Countdown to Retirement**
- **Retirement Countdown Video Series**
- **Retirement Planning FAQs**
- **NYSTRS Retirement Checklist**
- **Benefits Consultation**

If you are planning to retire at the end of this school year, you should schedule a benefits consultation now via [MyNYSTRS](#) or by calling (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6100. See the [Benefits Consultations](#) page at NYSTRS.org for more details.

You may also calculate your pension estimates with the MyNYSTRS Pension Estimator in your My Retirement tab in your MyNYSTRS account.

## **NYS office of Mental Health**

Youth Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business

Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or

Text "GOT5" to 741-741