

Officers

President: Joseph Becker

1st Vice President: Jenny McElroy

2nd Vice President: Carol Brown

Recording Secretary: Maura Brady-Wilson

***Corresponding Social Secretary:
Shannon Johnson***

Treasurer: Lindsay Wylie

Grievance Chairperson: Jacqueline Behnke

Happenings October 2025

Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT #2937, AFL-CIO

Editor: Caitlyn Gunderman | cgunderman@pischools.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone has been enjoying the beautiful fall weather. I have a few items to share with everyone this month.

Firstly, we recently did an MOA with the district in regards to the sick day incentive. Please see the website for the specific language. The purpose of this MOA was to address the anticipated situation of members choosing to retire as soon as they become eligible instead of waiting until the end of the year or mid-year. Our concern was with our current Sick Day Buy Out Language- you had to submit your letter by February 1st if you planned on retiring to be eligible for the buy out. We have now changed the language to PJTA members submitting a letter five months in advance of their retirement date. This is a benefit that could impact anyone at some point in their career. If anyone has any questions, please reach out.

Secondly, the November 4th conference day is quickly approaching. PJTA expressed our frustration with the choices, or lack thereof, for our September conference days. Many members will be traveling on November 4th so please be sure to follow the mileage reimbursement procedures. I have asked the district to send out a reminder to everyone regarding the reimbursement process. Please make sure you have signed up in MLP for any activity you will be attending.

Moreover, I recently attended the district-wide safety meeting where PJTA was well represented. Please consider attending the building-level meetings for the other schools in the district, in

addition to the meeting(s) for your assigned building. Please take the opportunity to speak your mind about ideas or concerns you have regarding safety.

Exciting news! PJTA has welcomed a new Treasurer and Social Chair. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to Shannon Johnson as she joins the executive board, and a big thank-you to Lindsay Wylie for taking on the Treasurer role.

Lastly, November is Open Enrollment month for the Port Jervis City School District. Eligible employees can make changes to their coverage with an effective date of January 1st, 2026. You will find the official letter and enrollment/termination form in your email. **Please note that all changes are due back to the payroll office by November 28th.** If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to all-payroll@pjschools.org

As always, if anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out.

In solidarity,

Joe Becker
PJTA President

Conference Day Transportation Reminders:

- No prior approvals are needed for transportation on MLP
- Some FAQs regarding submitting mileage:
 - Submit mileage claim forms to your building principal only if you are going to BOCES/another district workshop and your mileage is further than what you'd drive to work at PJCS D. Mileage is the difference between what you'd drive to the conference and what you'd drive to PJCS D (e.g., your mileage to conference=15 and your mileage to PJ=10, you'd submit for 5 miles each way). Mileage should be submitted to and from the location you are driving to (eg., you'd submit $5 \times 2 = 10$ as you are going to/from).
 - If you are driving to a location that is closer to your home than it would be than driving to PJCS D, do not submit a mileage form.
 - If you are carpooling with someone else, only the driver should submit for mileage reimbursement if the distance is further than what they would drive to work at PJCS D. If you are meeting at the district, the driver should submit mileage to/from the building to the conference location.
 - If you are traveling to a regional or BOCES event, please use either the building you are assigned to or your residence (whichever is closest) as the

starting point to your destination. In other words, if you live in PA or Sullivan County, you would use 10 Route 209 as the start point.

- The '25-'26 mileage reimbursement is \$.70 x the # of miles.
- You must include a printed MapQuest or Google Maps directions with the completed claim form.
- Please hand claim form and printed directions to your building principal **no later than November 7th** to be reimbursed.
- Emailed signatures are not accepted--only original signatures of both the employee and principal on claim forms will be processed.
- If there are any questions or concerns regarding mileage and how to submit, please contact Dr. Natasha Walkowicz/Ms. Jerianne Baumgardner

2025-2026 Committee Chairs:

Action Committee (*Public relations items, also used when needed in the past for negotiations, organization of events, rallies, etc.*)- Shannon Johnson

Building- Kelly Decker

Internal Audit- Janet Prundle

Mentoring- Tori Becker

Nominations and Elections- Kyle Ross

Political Action Committee (*Phone banking, BOE interviews, etc.*)- Nick Miller

Sick Bank and Scholarship- Carol Brown *is the chair per her job description. She will be looking for members. You can contact her directly.*

- **Current Sick Bank Committee Members:** Laurel Kronimus, Christine Piscitelli, Dawn Schadt, Kelly Tighe, and Shannon Vicchiariello
- **Current Scholarship Committee Members:** Megan Bartsch, Jeanne Corcoran, Lynn Felix, Jenn Hawkes, Janelle Jones, Laurel Kronimus, Nick Miller, Jen Scannell, Dawn Schadt

Social- *Shannon Johnson is the chair per her job description and will seek a committee if she chooses.*

Other: Happenings Editor/Website Manager/Social Media Page- (I will be asking this person to run a PJTA Facebook page as well. Many other local unions have one, and I think it will help with communication)- Caitlyn Gunderman

2025-2026 Representatives:

East Main Elementary

Building Representatives:

1. Stephanie Vandermark – *Head Building Representative*
2. Dawn Jones
3. Tori Becker
4. Kelly Tigue
5. Christine Fini
6. Tom Dubatowka
7. TBD

BEPT Representatives: Stephanie Vandermark and Christine Fini

Faculty Cabinet: Amy Theodore, Christine Fini, Sherri Patterson, Dawn Schadt, Kristin Wadeson, Seth Riehl, and Audrey Niosi

Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary

Building Representatives:

1. Jen Kowal – *Head Building Representative*
2. Carrie Sarbello
3. Meredith Burns
4. Shannon Vicchiariello
5. Heather Gass

BEPT Representatives: Amanda Franck, Megan Monohan, and Michele Grabiec

Faculty Cabinet: Michelle Thiele, Alyse Nappo, Harmony Brady, Jennifer Kowal, Danielle Trochiano, Julia Dekan, Noah Knesel, Donna Harkins, and Nicole Dennison

Middle School

Building Representatives:

1. Kyle Ross – *Head Building Representative*
2. Jenn Elston
3. Anthony Caporale

4. Nick Miller
5. Ashley Sparke
6. Amanda Snyder

BEPT Representatives: Jessica Davis and Rose Garrity

Faculty Cabinet: Nick Miller, Gina Carbone, Laurel Kronimus, and Karen Gessner

High School

Building Representatives:

1. *Austin Carroll– Head Building Representative*
2. Elizabeth Maloney
3. Amy Hoverstock
4. Jack Higgins
5. Alex Koval
6. Joe Coniglio
7. Colleen Koenig

BEPT Representatives: Julie Balogh and Rebecca Fedorick

Faculty Cabinet: Susan Butler, Austin Carroll, and Caitlyn Gunderman

Upcoming Meetings:

- **PTJA: 11/17 @ 3:45 pm in the MS library or attend virtually. President Joe Becker will send out a link before each meeting.**
- **Board of Education: 11/18 @ 7:00 pm**

Correspondence:

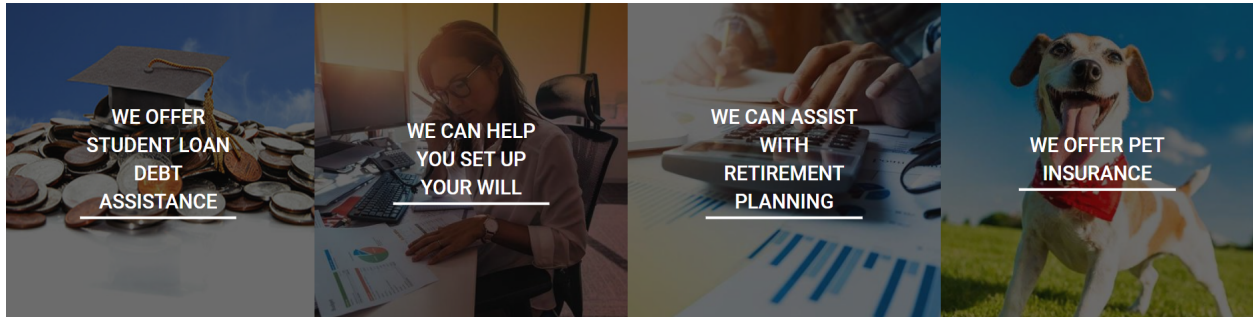
Condolence cards sent to:

Jason & Caitlyn Gunderman- on the loss of Jason's grandmother, Joan Ast.



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:

- Created in partnership with Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, this confidential helpline can provide answers, referrals, and empathetic support when you need it.
 - Check it out online: [Peer Support Line](#)
 - [PEER SUPPORT LINE](#) -- For more information or to speak with someone at the Peer Support Line, call toll-free 844-444-0152.
 - [Certification](#)
 - [Publications](#)
 - [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.

- [NYSTRS Benefits Pt. 2: Service Credit](#)
- [Pension Education Toolkit](#)
- [Retirement Planning](#)
- [Countdown to Retirement](#)
- [Retirement Countdown Video Series](#)
- [Retirement Planning FAQs](#)
- [NYSTRS Retirement Checklist](#)

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