



### 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 December 2025

Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT #2937, AFL-CIO

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

First and foremost, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Happy New Year!



I hope everyone is surviving this busy week as we head toward Winter Break. Yesterday, PJTA delivered the Elk's Toy Drive donations. I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their generosity. During the holiday season, I know there are so many organizations in need of support, and it truly speaks to the kindness of our community that so many choose to give. The students of our community are very fortunate to be surrounded by such caring people who look out for them each and every day. Thank you!

At the most recent OCTA meeting, NYS Senator James Skoufis was a guest speaker. He has consistently shown strong support for the teachers' unions and shared some of his key priorities in his upcoming campaign. He shared his goal to fix Tier 6 and his hope to keep chipping away at getting both Tier 5 and Tier 6 to be equitable to Tier 4. He also addressed the ongoing struggles school districts face with student attendance. He wants to develop ways to hold families more accountable in an effort to get kids in the classrooms more, so we can educate them.

Additionally, a regional solidarity action project is being organized by Jon Wedvik, President of Clarkstown Teachers' Association. This initiative aims to strengthen solidarity among locals and the region, increase political member engagement, promote NYSUT activities, and continue to fight for Fix Tier 6. An event is being planned for January or February, with details regarding time and location to be shared once finalized. All members will be invited to attend.

Lastly, congratulations to Jessica Davis, Brynn Allees, and Elena Keefer on receiving tenure at the December 16th board meeting. I would also like to extend best wishes to Noell Bushey on her retirement. Enjoy this well-deserved next chapter!

I hope everyone has a great Winter Break.

In solidarity,

Joe Becker  
PJTA President

**Union Facebook Page:** Our Port Jervis Teachers' Association Facebook page is up and running. You can search Port Jervis Teachers' Association to access the page. You will see our PTJA logo. Please like and follow the page. If you have any content you would like added, please reach out to Caitlyn Gunderman (cgunderman@pjschools.org) with any positive community events our members participate in, pictures, or any important updates that can be shared publicly. This is a public forum, but commenting is turned off. Through this page, you can also

access our PJTA website ([pjta.us](http://pjta.us)). If you have any questions, feel free to contact Caitlyn.

**Retiree Letters:** Anyone who is looking to retire in June, please be sure to submit your letters to the district by February 1st. However, be mindful of the new language that was shared out stating:

*Effective January 7, 2026, members who intend to retire and wish to qualify for the adjustment of final salary based on his/her accumulated sick time must have served in the District for at least ten (10) years and indicated in writing to the Superintendent the decision to retire at least (5) months prior to the anticipated date of retirement. This is necessary for the allocation of funds in the budget for the following year. Any request to depart from this deadline because of unforeseen or unusual developments affecting an individual will be considered on an individual case by case basis.*

I strongly encourage those contemplating retirement to contact NYSTRS to discuss their options.

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

- PTJA: **1/26 @ 3:45 pm** in the MS Media Center. President Joe Becker will send out a link prior to each meeting.
- Board of Education: **1/13 @ 7:00 pm** in the Main Office located on Pike Street

### **Correspondence:**

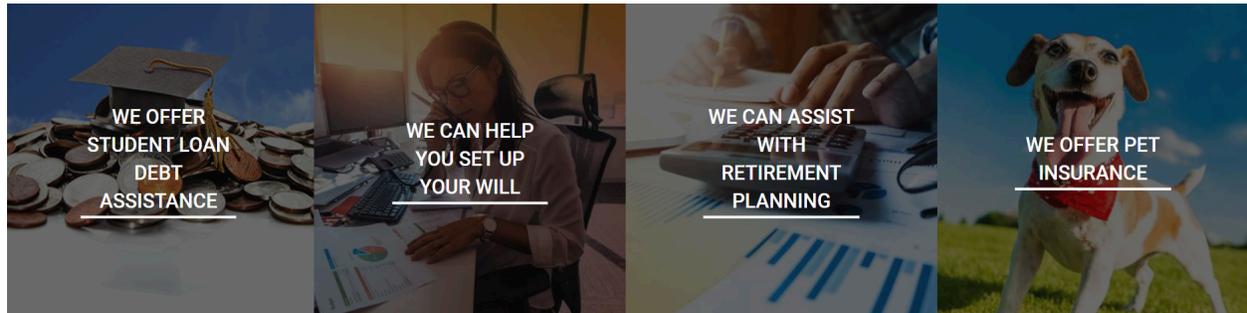
#### **Condolence cards sent to:**

Meika Mark on the passing of her mother-in-law, Elizabeth Maureen Mark  
Danielle Kahmar on the passing of her father  
Madison Crandell on the passing of her grandmother, Theresa Roland



## [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.
  - [Legal Assistance](#)
  - [Death Benefits](#)
  - [Credit Counseling](#)
  - [Certification](#)
  - [Professional Development and CTLE](#)
  - [MB Discount & Deals](#)
  - [New Member Life Insurance](#)

## **[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. 4: The Retirement Process](#)
- [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