



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 February 2026

Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT #2937, AFL-CIO

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

I hope everyone enjoyed the February break. It was a nice time of the year for those who chose to travel or just simply stay home and relax. Now that March is here, we are entering a busy time of the year.

Firstly, I would like to address a recent memo that went out from the NYSED Commissioner regarding a waiver of the 180-day

requirement. I am currently awaiting clarification; however, for now, please consider that we have two remaining snow days. If the waiver applies to us, we may be able to regain the day we used on Monday. Please be assured that we will not exceed the 182 contractually obligated workdays. We shall see what Mother Nature has in store for us in the upcoming weeks. Hoping for warmer weather and sunshine!

Will Meetings: Please note, March 10th will be a virtual Zoom day for anyone interested in setting up a will through our Prepaid Legal Service Plan. A sign-up link will be shared as soon as I receive it from the firm. There will be two 20-minute time slots available throughout the duration of the day, most likely between 9 am and 5 pm. If you register and do not receive your Zoom invitation prior to March 10th, please be sure to check your spam or junk folder. Last time, we had several members who forgot, couldn't find the email, and so on, which caused complications. Please be diligent about being on time to your scheduled appointment.

Retirement News: In celebratory news, we now have a total of four retirees this year. Noel Bushey effectively retired in January, and the following members are slated to retire effective June 30th: Lisa Perkowski, Krista Lissner, and Mark Paperstian. Please be sure to congratulate them as they close this important chapter of their educational careers. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to our students and school community have made a lasting impact.

On behalf of PJTA, thank you for your years of service and for all you have done. We wish you a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement!

School Board Meetings: To date, only 77 members have signed up to attend a board meeting. That is significantly less than half of our association. Please consider signing up and representing PJTA at a meeting. I know there are several who have signed up and attended more than one, if not all, and we appreciate you.

Benefit Fund: The Benefit Fund had an inquiry, and I brought it to the group. Ultimately, it was kicked up to Fund Counsel. See the response below:

COBRA notifications and requirements.

The PJTA Benefit Fund has legal obligations that must be followed in regards to sending notifications about COBRA and other similar matters. By law, The Fund sends certified letters to those members who have had a loss of coverage event including dependents graduating from college, notifying them that their coverage has terminated upon graduation and that they have the right to elect continuation coverage under COBRA.

In some instances, students may continue full-time student status while working toward a Master's or other graduate Degree. Just as during the undergraduate degree, if a dependent certification form is received for consecutive semesters, the dependent's coverage (under the age of 25) would remain uninterrupted.

As a reminder, it is the obligation of the member to inform the PJTA Benefit Fund when any change occurs in marital status or dependent status---marriage, divorce, separation, birth or adoption of a child, or death of an eligible dependent. Payment of benefits can be put in jeopardy if the member fails to notify the Fund of any of these changes.

Tier 6 Rally: About a dozen members and I will be traveling to Albany on March 8th to participate in the Fix Tier 6 Rally. Thousands of New York State United Teachers members from across the state have registered to attend, and it is expected to be a powerful and impactful event. As this is an election year, we are hopeful that continued advocacy will help move us closer to aligning Tier 5 and Tier 6 more closely with Tier 4. Thank you to those who are attending and representing our membership at this important event.

In closing, please be sure to get active and stay involved in PJTA as much as possible. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

In solidarity,

Joe Becker
PJTA President

Dental/Vision: NEW PRIVACY POLICY is available on the PJTA website.

Reminders:

- Dependent student certifications for the spring 2025 semester are due. Forms are available on pjta.us
- Any changes to coverage, including but not limited to: birth, divorce, graduation, should be submitted to the Fund as soon as possible. Updated enrollment forms are available on pjta.us.

Scholarship Committee: Scholarship applications were due March 1. Essays should have been submitted online through the Google document. Application is available on pjta.us.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the scholarship fundraisers these last two months. The Payroll Drive raised \$2,485, and the Super Bowl Pool raised \$1,565.00, as a winner donated their \$60 back to the Scholarship Fund.

Reminder PTJA Annual Raffle: Work Week Raffle tickets are available for purchase from April 6- May 1st. 1 ticket = \$10.00 with 30 chances to win! 3 tickets will be drawn for 10 work days from May 11- May 22. Prizes: 1st-\$100, 2nd -\$50, 3rd -\$25. Please consider buying or selling tickets to benefit the PTJA Scholarship Fund.

Correspondence:

Condolence cards sent to:

Card sent to Jon and Brittany Foley on the passing of Jon's grandmother, Madeline Lucille Foley



Congratulations cards sent to:

Card sent to Jordan Fitzgerald on the birth of her son, Maverick

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:

- [Travel Assistance Services](#)
- [Calm Service](#)
- [Certification Webinars](#)
- [Educator Tax Deduction](#)
- [Year in Review](#)
- [Know your Rights](#)

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