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AFT Local 3037/ NYSUT Local 22-220

The BEES Beacon

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk



*From the Lighthouse
in the East
to the Lighthouse
in the West*



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President - Asha Mazza-Shaw

Union Strong



Greetings BEES members. I hope you all had a chance to enjoy the holiday season--I wish you all the best in the New Year. It's difficult to believe that January will soon be over, and before we know it, the mid-winter break will be here. Keep in mind that if you need to take some time off before or after the break, you'll need to use your personal days (please refer to your contract and the personal day forms for specifics). If you happen to be sick, it's helpful to have medical documentation in case you are asked for it. Importantly, only HR can request medical documentation from you; this request should not come from the building level.

There have been some changes to the requirements to access the NYS COVID leave. Previously, you could be reimbursed days by requesting reimbursement following a positive test. Now, if you test positive for COVID, you must also present medical documentation in order to request reimbursement of sick time. Please note that the NYS COVID leave remains a three time use. This dates back to when the leave first began, so once you have used the NYS COVID leave three times, if you test positive for COVID and need to be out sick, you will be using your sick time without reimbursement. Please refer to the updated email sent out by Mr. Cook for details regarding reimbursement using the NYS COVID leave.

There have been many questions about how the negotiations for the Yellow contract are moving along. Understandably, there is also concern from Yellow contract members who are nearing retirement. It is important to remember that our contracts do not "expire". If we have not settled on a new contract before the end date of the previous one, we continue to operate under the parameters of the previous contract until a new agreement is reached. Another important note is that benefits that currently exist in our contracts must be negotiated out in order for us to "lose" them. There have been times when benefits have been changed in the past in order to maintain, enhance or add other benefits--this is the process of negotiations. The members of the negotiations committee and team have been working diligently to ensure all the feedback from the Yellow contract survey has been taken into account, and we have clear goals moving forward. We will be updating the building representatives as much as possible, so please be sure to attend your building level meetings so you have the latest information.

It is important that you attend your building level meetings for so many reasons! Our building representatives have valuable information to bring to you about various workshops, negotiations, communications, updated protocols and more. You are missing out on so much by not attending. If you are someone who regularly attends meetings, grab a friend or two, and bring them with you!

President - Asha Mazza-Shaw

Union Strong



We have had a record year when it comes to hiring new staff, and our BEES membership continues to grow. If you are a new member, thank you for joining the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk. Our union is strong because of our membership, because of the many voices that make up the BEES. There are several titles, positions and experiences, individualized and shared, that make up our collective voice. There are numerous valuable benefits to being a union member! You have member benefits with NYSUT (New York State United Teachers), which includes legal plans, financial planning, shopping discounts, home mortgage discounts, travel discounts, pet insurance, student loan assistance and more! Visit <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/> to learn more and be on the lookout for an upcoming Zoom meeting to learn about how you can utilize all of the NYSUT member benefits. AFT (American Federation of Teachers) also has many member benefits available to you as a union member. Educational opportunities and scholarships for children of members are just a few! Check them out here - <https://www.aft.org/member-benefits/education-learning-opportunities>

- NYSUT members enjoy exclusive access to savings of up to 50% on hotels, flights, car rentals, theme parks and more!
- NYSUT members can save up to 30% on vacations to Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World, and other Orlando, FL area attractions.
- NYSUT members enjoy exclusive access to savings of up to 50% at more than 850,000 locations nationwide, including 21,000 local deals.
- NYSUT members can save approximately \$300 to \$500 per year on heating oil, along with a number of benefits upon program sign-up.
- NYSUT members licensed in New York State can save 27% on this online defensive driving course sponsored through the National Safety Council.
- There's so much more! Be sure to check the member benefits sections of the websites.

President - Asha Mazza-Shaw

Union Strong

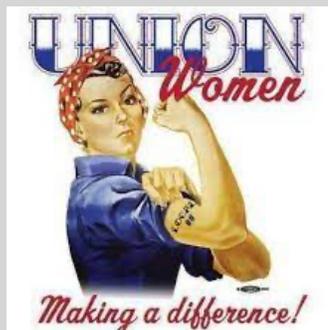


Of course, the most significant benefit of all are our CBAs (Contractual Benefits Agreements). There are two contracts that fall under our BEES union: the Yellow contract, which is our paraprofessionals (aides, TAs and sign language interpreters) and our Blue contract, which is our other certified staff. Our contracts contain all benefits that have been negotiated since the BEES' inception. Such significant benefits include: Paid sick leave, personal days, bereavement time, holidays, contractual salaries, longevities, percentages, health insurance, length of work day, sick bank, sick leave retirement pay out, etc. These CBAs are extremely important, and you should know the benefits that exist within them--your benefits. It is also important to understand that as a union, we must sign up each new employee who could be part of the BEES. We must also maintain our union's membership numbers. If we do not, if our membership falls below 50% for either contract, that contract becomes void--all of the benefits within it will no longer exist. These are benefits we would never get back. I tell you this because knowledge is power; you may think it's fine to opt out of the union, what does it matter? It does matter, because each of us sets an example for others. So, be the example of union strength, of solidarity. Tell the new employees in your building to talk to your building representative about getting signed up for their union benefits, or bring them to a meeting! If you no longer have a hard copy of your contract, you can now access them online (thanks to our HR department). Just head over to the ES BOCES webpage, click on the "For Staff" button and then on the blue "Human Resources" link. On the left side you will see a link that says, "Contractual Bargaining Agreements" and you can take a look at your CBA anytime you need, or you can click here - <https://www.esboces.org/Page/3192>

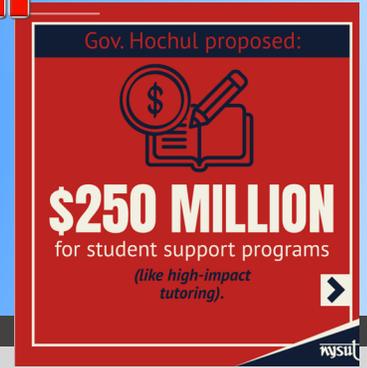
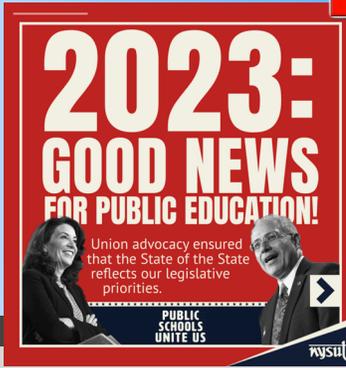
In closing, I want to thank each of you for the hard work that you do at this agency and for your membership. Not one position is more challenging than another, not one is more important than another; it truly takes all of us working together to create the best possible environment for the wide variety of students we serve daily. I have met some of the most incredible people during my time at ES BOCES. It takes a special heart to work at this agency, and I am proud to represent you.

In Solidarity,

Asha



Politics in Education



Declaring that the “state of the state is strong, but we still have work to do,” Gov. Kathy Hochul detailed her legislative agenda for the year ahead in her 2023 State of the State address on Jan. 10. She pledged to continue the state’s commitment to fully funding Foundation Aid, and detailed increases for a number of [initiatives supported by the statewide union](#).

“Governor Hochul’s historic commitment to invest in our public schools is a huge step forward and is exactly what our state needs,” said [NYSUT President Andy Pallotta](#), noting that fully funded Foundation Aid will dramatically improve the lives of students, educators and families across New York. He also commended the governor’s plan to connect the state minimum wage to inflation, which will provide much-needed financial relief to families across the state.

“We celebrate the governor’s ongoing commitment to building a world-class public school system that supports New Yorkers at every stage of their educational lives, from universal pre-K to affordable, equitable higher education through SUNY, CUNY and community colleges,” he said.

In her State of the State address and [governing agenda](#), Hochul proposed:

- Investing an additional \$2.7 billion in Foundation Aid for New York state school districts, a 13 percent increase.
- Dedicating \$250 million in Foundation Aid to high-impact tutoring programs statewide.
- Allocating \$125 million for universal prekindergarten, making it roughly 95 percent funded.
- Creating a \$20 million grant program to expand early college high school and Pathways in Technology Early College High School programs, which allow students to earn college credits while still in high school.
- Investing \$10 million in competitive funding over two years so that school districts, BOCES and community colleges can develop strategic workforce plans that promote job readiness in collaboration with local industry.
- Increasing reimbursements for school-based health centers via Medicaid
- Increasing mental health coverage for school-aged children through private insurance.
- Providing up to \$500 million in state-matching funds for endowment contributions to SUNY’s four university centers at Buffalo, Binghamton, Albany and Stony Brook
- Funding \$200 million in digital and IT infrastructure across the SUNY system and \$200 million in capital funding for research labs.
- Providing greater financial stability for SUNY and CUNY.
- Providing direct admission for all graduating high school students to their local community colleges.
- Initiating a pilot project to link the SUNY admissions processes of different campuses so that students who are not accepted at a specific school are automatically considered for admission at other institutions. This could provide students with greater access to a local and affordable higher education option.

Author: Sylvia Saunders and Kara Smith

Source: NYSUT Communications

Executive Vice President - Al Rios

Getting to Know NYSTRS



I hope you all had a safe, happy and healthy holiday break and I want to send my Happy New Year greetings to all our members.

As we start the second half of this school year I hope all our members had a chance to relax, recuperate and re-energize as you carry on the hard work and dedication to our students for the second half of this year. I also want to extend my congratulations to those members that have already or are preparing to retire and as one of your delegates for The New York State Retirement System I wanted to share some information that I received during the annual delegate meeting.

The 102nd annual meeting of NYSTRS delegates took place this past November at the Saratoga Springs City Center. There was an immense amount of valuable information for all NYSTRS members. As one of the NYSTRS delegates for ESBOCES, I thought it important to share some information that was disseminated at the meeting and provide some important numbers and a website which you can use to make sure you are well informed and prepared for retirement.

What is NYSTRS?

New York State Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS):

Vision: To be the model for pension fund excellence and exceptional customer service.

Mission: To provide our members with a secure pension.

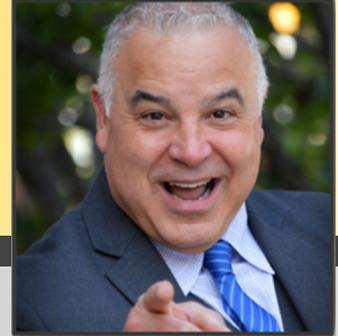
- Its purpose is to manage the fund from which NYS public school teachers and administrators (excluding those in New York City) receive retirement benefits. Benefits are statutory and paid in accordance with the laws enacted by the Legislature

Our Members must join NYSTRS if they are employed under all of the following conditions:

- As a teacher, teaching assistant, guidance counselor, educational administrator, or any other title covered by this System, and
- By a New York State (excluding New York City) public school district or BOCES and
- Full-time every workday for the full day, as defined in the appropriate contract or job description, through the end of the school year.

Executive Vice President - Al Rios

Getting to Know NYSTRS



If there is one bit of information I came away from the meeting it was that , “ It is never too early to prepare for retirement.”

Looking to the future, the three stages of retirement.

Stage #1 - Early in your career, These are considered your accumulation years.

- Make sure you set up your 403 B.
- You should be aware of your tier status.
- Check for your basic Benefit information.
- Accumulation of service credits.

Stage #2 - Midway to retirement, Plan for your retirement.

- Buy back any time you may have accrued.
- Be familiar with service retirement estimates.
- Make sure your beneficiary paperwork is updated.
- Death and disability estimates.

Stage #3 - Retirement is within reach.

- Attend P.R.E.P workshops (pension and Retirement Education Program)
- Schedule a benefits consultation
- Choosing benefit payments that are right for you.

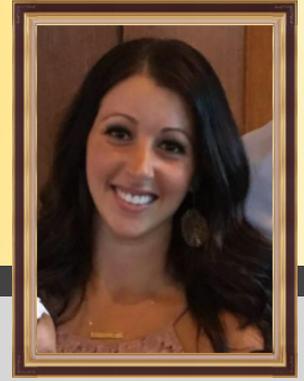
Some important points that were emphasized for all members was that all members should make sure they update their beneficiary information when needed. All members should check their Annual benefits profile and make sure their salary is correct and if you have any other time you need to buy back, you should buy back your time as soon as possible.

I hope introducing you to NYSTRS informed you and helped you learn a little more about YOUR retirement system. I also encourage you to register for a NYSTRS account and learn more about the benefits by visiting NYSTRS.org or call (800)348-7298

All the best,

Al Rios

Executive Vice President - Amanda Pica

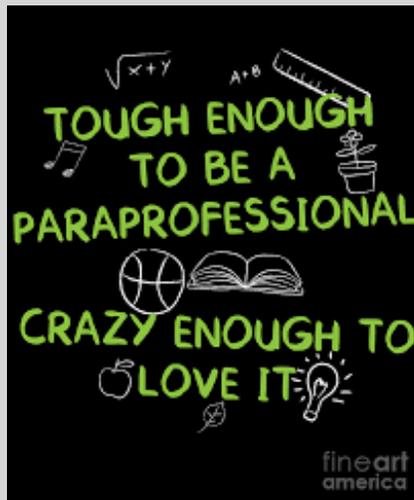


Better Together

Happy 2023!!! It's hard to believe another year has passed. I hope you all enjoyed this holiday season and were able to spend some much needed time with loved ones. A new year is usually the starting point of new goals and resolutions, I always take this time to reflect back on the all the challenges yet appreciate all the success personally and professionally that has been made within the last year. As a union, we have made great progress but there is always room for more growth. 2023 is a big year for all of us. Negotiations are underway and I am certain our committees and E-board will continue to advocate for all of our members.

Just a few reminders... It is so important to attend your building level meetings, this is where the most important information is provided and questions are answered. Familiarize yourself with your union building representative as well as your building mentor. They are there to help you navigate any issue within your building. If at any point these issues cannot be resolve please reach out to one of our members on the E-board, we are always here to help.

I hope 2023 has been kind to all of you this far and look forward to these next few months!



Check out all your union membership has to offer!

LEGAL SERVICE PLAN

Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

FINANCIAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone & virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more

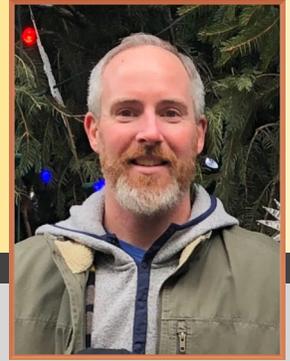


Learn more by scanning the QR code to the right,
visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org
or calling **800-626-8101**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Jan-Feb 2023

First Vice President - Keith Flynn



Your Voice, Your Union

I hope everyone enjoyed their holiday break! The month of January can be cold, bleak and not as inspiring as the preceding month, but before you know it we will be at the winter break. For those of you going away during the February break, I wish you safe travels, have fun, but be careful! I wish you all a restful and enjoyable winter break. Or, maybe will have an opportunity for a snow day? I always look forward to that one unexpected day off to chill home by the fire or build a snowman with the family. It's 60 degrees one week and 35 the next, so you never know if mother nature will deliver?

BOCES ADVOCACY DAY (formerly called Lobby Day) will be March 1st this year and we will be going back to Albany. My BEES volunteer list has been filling up quite quickly, and I'd like to thank in advance all those who volunteered to take the early morning bus ride. The last 2 years, during the pandemic, the event was held virtually. Although it was still a great opportunity for our students to advocate for all the great work we do on a daily basis, nothing can replace taking the students up to the state capitol. Each and every year, the students rise to the occasion and make a lasting impression on our state lawmakers. Once again, students from Special Education programs will work side by side with CTE students as they get to truly experience government at work.

As we approach the half way point of the 2022-2023 school year, we can feel a sense of relief that we now have a state legislature that is pro-education and pro-labor. We are eagerly awaiting the state budget proposal, but all indicators are pointing towards a healthy budget for our school districts. That would mean a lot of the programs and services that BOCES offers to our component school districts will be intact.

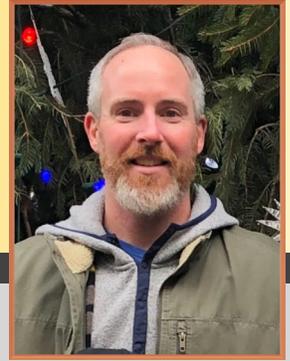
As we get through the winter chill, we can begin to think about the warm months ahead. The temperatures will rise and we will start thinking about all of those retirement parties and end-of-the-school-year events. Speaking of end-of-the-year events, the Honorarium will be held this year. Please make sure you attend if you sign up. Unexpected circumstances always come up, but we want to make sure the money is well spent and that another member doesn't miss out on the opportunity to attend.

Have an excellent 2 nd half of the school year and make the most of it.

Be well,

Keith Flynn

First Vice President - Keith Flynn



Your Voice, Your Union

BOCES Advocacy Day should be scheduled around the beginning of November. Last year, the event was held virtually. Prior to COVID, it was held at the N.Y.S Capitol, in Albany. It's an amazing event for our students and they continue to shine each and every year. You will be provided with breakfast and lunch and will be given a "professional day" to take the bus up to the state capitol. As soon as we know whether it will be held virtually or in Albany, we will be seeking BEES members to meet with legislators and advocating for support on a variety of issues that pertain specifically to BOCES. Students participate with us, which affords them a unique opportunity to see how the government works and to get involved in the process. It is truly a worthwhile and gratifying experience. Please email me if you are interested in participating at keithbeeunion@gmail.com.

Election Day is quickly approaching. Please head out to the polls and vote for pro-education and pro-labor candidates. NYSUT is working hard to educate the entire membership on endorsing candidates who are looking to fortify our member benefits, preserve collective bargaining and not to strip those hard earned benefits away. We want all of our members to feel confident that they can retire with their pension secured. In addition, we want Medicare and Social Security to be available when you retire and not to have it sunset every 5 years. As well as fixing Tiers 5 & 6 which currently have NYSUT members pay into their pension for their entire career and unable to retire until they turn 62.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season!

Keith



Amazing SRPs

Dear Fellow BEES Members,

I hope everyone had a wonderful and relaxing holiday. I always feel that after the holidays, it seems the school year moves quite fast as we approach Regents testing and hopefully warmer weather sooner than later.

We still have NYS COVID leave in place and the form can be found on the BOCES web page if needed. We are able to apply for the leave and get the days back, however, it is on your own sick time after you have applied for and been reimbursed with the leave three times. Keep in mind reimbursement now requires medical documentation of a positive test.

The Agency had been hiring many applicants and HR has been inundated with paperwork. If you are a newly hired Teaching Assistant there are requirements you must do within a certain time frame.

1. Go to TEACH System: OTI: NYSED- Higher Education
2. Certification from Start to Finish
3. Becoming Certified-What's My next Step?
4. Pathways to Certification
5. Types of Certifications and Licenses
6. Search Certification Requirements
7. Apply for a Certification





Amazing SRPs

University of the State of New York - New York State Education Department Office of Teaching

Initiatives

Educator Resources

Certification

Fingerprinting

TEACH System

Topics A-Z

Certificate Holder Lookup

P 1: Log In to your NY.gov TEACH account

1. [TEACH Login](#)
2. Go to TEACH Online Services
3. Scroll to "Online Applications" and click on "Apply for Certificate."

STEP 2: Verify / Update Profile

1. Confirm your legal name including spelling, prefixes, and suffixes.
2. Update your mailing address, email, and phone number(s).
3. Confirm your U.S. Citizenship status (Y/N).
4. Enter your education information.

Step 4: Continue with the Application

- Answer Moral Character Questions
- Sign / Click Affidavit Button
- Sign / Click Sign Application Button
- View and Print Application Summary Page
- Pay the [Application Fee](#)

Step 5: [Check the Status of Your Application](#)

Click here to visit the TEACH website -
<https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/>

Area VP for Para Educators - Angela Ritchie



Amazing SRPs

The website will also help you in setting up an account.
It is important that you search Certification requirements.

1. Education-H. S Diploma, GED, or HSE
2. NY State Teacher Certification Exam-ATAS
3. Workshop- Child Abuse Identification
4. Workshop-School Violence Intervention and Prevention
5. Workshop-Dignity for All Students Act
6. Finger Print Clearance

I hope this information is helpful. Any additional questions either contact
H.R. or your Building Rep.

Wishing everyone a healthy and successful New Year!

Angela Ritchie



Area VP for Special Education - Patti Richards

Union Strong All Day Long



Happy New Year! I hope the holiday recess was spent decompressing with family and friends and making new memories. I wish you all a very happy and healthy year ahead.

As we returned in January, many have already begun the process of writing IEP for annual reviews. This requires a tremendous amount of work and time to complete. To correctly write an IEP, it takes a minimum of three hours each, and when you multiply that to the number of students you service, it almost feels as if it is a second job. As you are aware, over the summer many teachers were hired and are new to the agency. If you are a veteran teacher, please lend your support to the new members to guide them through writing an IEP. New members should also take advantage of writing IEP workshops offered on My Learning Plan. The information provided will be very valuable.

During this time, be sure to collaborate with your team members to review their service recommendations and the students' progress. It is essential when preparing recommendations for your students that the data supports the recommendations. Encourage your administration to attend your team meetings when there will be a class size change, addition of an IA or if there will be a change of service. This allows everyone on the team the opportunity to share why the recommendations are being made. Your administration should provide you with guidelines that provide you with the information they want included in the pleps and throughout the document. As teachers your insight is valuable.

You are the advocate for your students to get what they need to be successful. In addition to being a voice for your students, you also serve to inform the families. You are the connection between the student and the world outside the classroom.

Area VP for Special Education - Patti Richards

Union Strong All Day Long



Throughout the year teacher and SRP shortages have been a front and center concern. Throughout the agency, our programs are well staffed. However, many programs have numerous employees out on medical leave, workers compensation, educational leave, child rearing leave etc. Their positions cannot be filled. As programs are able to hire, they tend to choose from our substitute pool. Your union is working with the agency to secure more substitutes and fill vacancies as they arise.

Some have voiced that due to shortages they don't feel comfortable in the classroom. We encourage you all to work as a team- and if possible, try not to be alone in a classroom with students. If there is an acting out student, secure the safety of the other students and call for assistance. Use your de-escalation training to slow down the sequence of events which can reduce the likelihood that a situation will escalate into a physical confrontation or injury. We understand that situations can change rapidly, but if we become proactive with de-escalation, more people will remain safe.

The agency is also forward-looking and piloting new approaches to servicing students. During the month of December, Sayville, Premm and BLC began an 8-2-1-2 model. These classes have eight students, two teachers, one assistant and two paraprofessionals. The teachers are working together to define roles and responsibilities for the rooms. This is essential as all BOCES programs are different and the needs of the students vary. The teachers will play a vital role in the success of the class size pilot. If successful, it could be implemented in other programs.

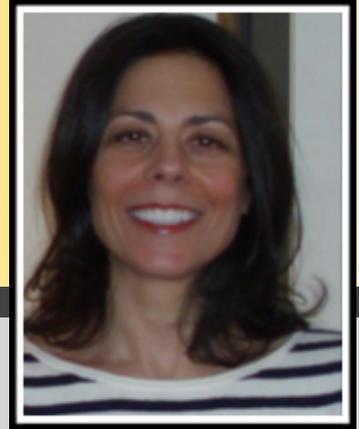
BOCES is always looking for new ideas, even ideas that are outside the box. Should you have any, let us know. We are all working for your safety and well-being. Should you ever have questions please reach out to your building representative. Each month, please attend your building union meetings, the information shared is valuable.

In Solidarity,

Patti



Area VP for Itinerants/SAS - Kristin Ericson Abbruzzese



Things to Remember

I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year to you and your loved ones. Welcome to the many new members! ES BOCES has been growing so quickly this year and we have been doing interviews non-stop. I also want to congratulate anyone with new babies, engagements and weddings. I am happy to hear of all the wonderful and joyful events many members have been celebrating since the school year began. Thank you, to all the members who have been working tirelessly while waiting for help to arrive at their buildings while their programs have been growing. Unfortunately, this year, there seems to be more than usual many members out for an extended amount of time. In regards to the related services and itinerants we do not have any assistance to cover us until we return. We are different, so if ES BOCES cannot find a sub to cover the position we all need to take on a piece of that caseload. Like all positions in ES BOCES, if a member is out for whatever reason but will be coming back ES BOCES cannot hire for their position they must keep it available for when the member is able to return to work. For many of us we sometimes see coworkers who have retired who will return and fill in for several weeks or even months, which is great and also a huge help.

Please keep your Google Schedule up to date so if and when Administration needs to see how full every member's schedule is it really makes for a case for needing more help in your building. So here we are it is January and the start of 2023 Annual Review season, please provide any new members with any tricks you have discovered that help you get through this time. Annual reviews call for extra time to do testing, write reports and I feel the most important thing is to be organized. Organization is very important to make sure you are getting your reports done in a timely fashion. We need to adhere to deadlines since the districts need to meet these deadlines in providing the families with the IEP to review before their child's CSE. It is a law that families are entitled to this time so they can be prepared to discuss any changes they would like to see in their child's educational services. It is also our professional responsible but what a feeling when that last IEP is completed. I also recommend not to wait till the last day to complete the IEP since I have seen IEP direct go down, freeze up or even members have computer issues and now the deadline is here, UGH. Now onto some housekeeping, please remember to keep all your required licensing up to date and when you do renew your licensing you send a copy to Human Resources. Second, you are required to complete the 15 hours of professional development every school year that includes completing the required paperwork and submitting it to HR by the end of each school year.

Contractual Benefits Officer - Nick DeBlanco



It Benefits You to Know

Good morning fellow members. I would like to wish you and your families a very happy and healthy new year.

As the calendar changes and the new year takes hold, there are some changes that we all should pay attention to. Your contributions to retirement accounts have increased as they do each year. This means that if you have the ability to put more money away in your account, this is a good time to contact your financial advisor and discuss changes that will benefit your retirement.

I would also urge you to view your Social Security account. Many of you have possibly received a transcript or an email saying that your transcript is ready to view from the Social Security administration. I recommend you do so. By reviewing your Social Security account, you can make sure that any donations and contributions are accurate. There is also some useful information on how to use the program efficiently when you do retire.

If you're planning on retiring in the next five years, I would highly suggest you make contact with the retirement system that you are in and have a five-year review. These reviews help you align the last few years of employment and help to maximize your retirement benefit. N.Y.S.U.T. also hosts P.R.E.P. seminars for retirement a few times a year. The seminars are now in person again and they are held in Hauppauge and in Riverhead alternatively. The seminars fill up fast. Visit the N.Y.S.U.T. website and find out when the next prep seminars are and join early.

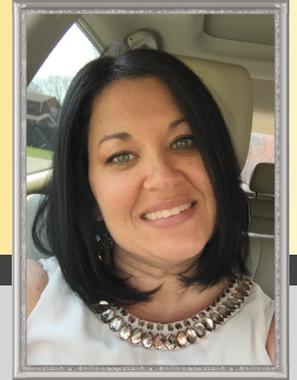
The new year restarts many optical and dental plans. Many Member's yearly allowances begin with the new year, plan your treatments accordingly.

Inflation and high prices have been the buzz words for some time. We as members have some additional tools at our disposal. Spend some time reviewing the member benefits page. As a Group of like-minded people, we create an opportunity for merchants and suppliers. There are many things that are available through our union membership. See which work for you.

Thank you for being a member!

Nick

Social Chair - Danielle Ibba-Morabito



Let's BEE Social



Join your fellow BEES members in celebrating this year's retirees at the

BEES HONORARIUM
DINNER • MUSIC • DANCING

Save the Date!
Wednesday, June 7, 2023

Land's End
8 Brown's River Road
Sayville, NY 11782

The graphic features a chalkboard background with a red apple containing a yellow bee, a green pencil, and a row of colorful pencils at the top and bottom. The text 'School is Out FOREVER' is written in colorful chalk.

Recording Secretary - Tiffany Robinson

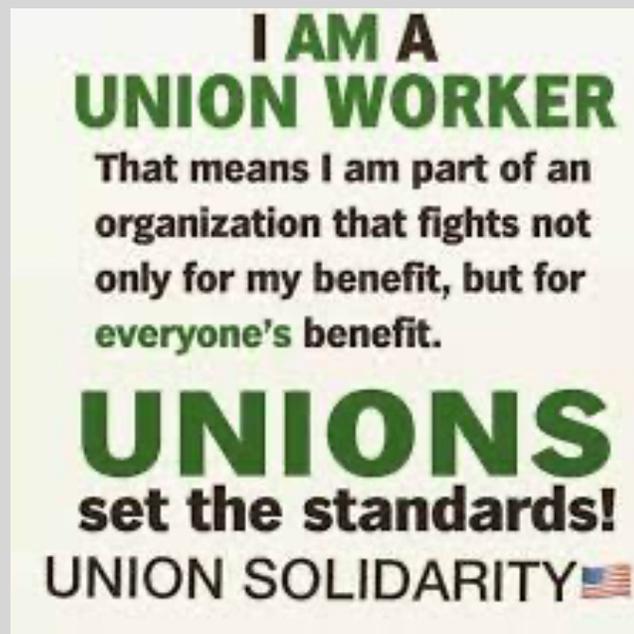


Nice Notes

Hello fellow BEES members! I hope everyone's enjoying their school year so far, and has had a healthy and happy holiday and a positive and productive start to the New Year! It's hard to believe that we have entered 2023 and only have a few months left in the school year. Hopefully everyone is steadily getting through the year with ease without any major obstacles. Your union continues to work hard and stand by its members. The executive board will continue to work to provide support and guidance whenever needed. Members should always use resources that are available, and don't forget....Stay informed! Attend your building meetings whenever you can to get useful information. All voices matter when working together!

Thank you for continuing to stand by your union!

Tiffany



Retiree Chapter Chairperson - Terry Kalb

Radiant Retirees



January is an important month for those of us who have been eagerly waiting for reimbursement of our Medicare premiums paid in 2022. As you know, ESBOCES has switched from quarterly reimbursements to one annual reimbursement in February/March of the following year effective 2022. The date of reimbursement depends upon how soon you send the required paperwork - the deadline is January 31, 2023.

I'm getting a lot of questions about this so I hope this will help.

1. You will get a SSA1099 statement from the Social Security office this month. Look out for it. It has the total amount of the Medicare premiums you paid in 2022. Until ESB HR has your SSA1099 you CANNOT get reimbursed.
2. You were mailed a letter from Pat Sauber and Lisa Annunziato from HR last month explaining this. You need to send a copy (not your original) of the SSA1099 for each spouse who gets Medicare back to HR as soon as you get it. The timing of your reimbursement depends on how soon they get your SSA1099. It is my understanding that you will get the basic premium and IRMAA surcharge reimbursed at the same time. I have asked Pat and Lisa to confirm this but have not yet heard back. I will call them tomorrow.
3. If you want to get the SSA10999 quickly and/or if you are away, you should be able to download it from your personal Social Security portals as soon as it is available.
4. If you are not yet collecting Social Security and pay your premiums directly to Medicare, you must send HR a copy of the monthly bill statements you get from Medicare. Save every statement!
5. HR also needs a copy of your Social Security COLA statement which projects your 2023 premium amounts. Mine arrived at the end of November. Send the COLA and SSA1099 to HR together.
6. If sending via email, follow the letter's directions for sending secure emails to HR to protect your privacy.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy winter!

Terry Kalb

BEES Retiree Chapter President

Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Collaborative Community! The SHS Staff

This issue of Spotlight on our BEES community is unique because it is not on just one member but instead I wanted to shine a spotlight on The staff of the Sequoya High School program. Each year the SHS staff generously contributes and participates in fundraising activities throughout the year that raise money which will be used to benefit students and activities throughout the SHS program. This year a new idea for fundraising was brought up and SHS building Reps. Donna Morey, Bill Clarke & Monequa Cobb spearheaded and organized a fundraising holiday basket raffle and get together at a local business. The turnout was impressive and even more impressive were the baskets that were donated. Over 27 baskets were put together and donated by the teachers, assistants, aides, related service, nurses and many more of the staff of SHS. It was a wonderful showing of camaraderie. It was nice to see staff together after work enjoying eachothers company, conversing and most important of all supporting a worthwhile cause. I wish I could name every last person who sold raffle tickets, donated merchandise and volunteered to help but I have to say it was a collaborative effort of dozens of people. Most important of all is that the fundraising effort was a success and the money raised will be used to benefit our students. Congratulations and way to go Sequoya H.S. Staff.

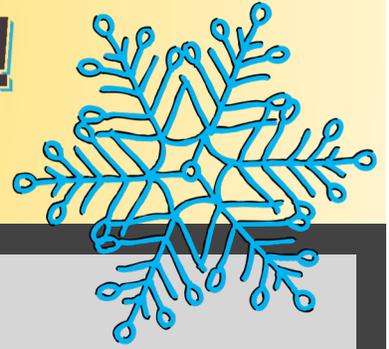
Is there a BEES member you think should deserves the “spotlight”? Email me at Alrbeeunion@gmail.com and they could be in our next issue of the BEES Beacon!



Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Collaborative Community!

The SHS Staff





BEES

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

Union Strong

Asha Mazza-Shaw - President
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Terry Kalb - Retiree Chapter Chairperson
Mary Longo - BEES Office Secretary
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