

EPEA OFFICERS

President:

Donna Walters

Vice President:

Garth Merlino

Secretary:

Lisa Reidy

Treasurer:

Deb Gampietro

IMPORTANT

The deadline
to receive your PD
Stipend for this year
is May 23rd, 4 p.m.

Open enrollment for
Health Trust runs
May 1—May 22

EPEA News

Volume 5, Issue 2

April 2025

Greetings EPEA Brothers and Sisters,

Way back in the day (my least favorite phrase that I have been using more often) Tiers 3 and 4 looked like Tiers 5 and 6. Our NYSUT Tier 1 and 2 brothers and sisters worked for 23 years to make drastic improvements the Tiers 3 and 4— for which I am grateful. I am so grateful in fact that I feel it our duty to step up and fix tiers 5 and 6. I strongly encourage you to attend the Fix Tier 6 Rally in Niagara Square on Tuesday May 6. The rally begins at 5pm and should wrap up by 6:30. It is a family friendly event with food trucks and a live band.

On a different note, the NYSUT Group Legal plan is up and running for us with our first “Documents Day” scheduled in a couple of weeks. If you completed the sign-up form, you will be receiving a confirmation email with your time slot by Friday May 7th. It isn’t too late to sign up for a timeslot; check you email for the link.

The New York State Department of Education and NYSUT have finalized the re- requirements for APPR. A committee of approximately 20 EPEA brothers and sis- ters met in the late fall to begin working on this to get an idea of what we would like our annual professional performance review to look like. We will continue this work now that we have an actual guidance document to follow.

On May 15th we will be hosting a visit to 3 of our buildings from Jaime Ciffone, NYSUT Executive Vice President. She will be traveling with to members of the NYSUT Education and Research team. Jaime works closely with the New York State Education department, so let me know if you have any questions for her. Thank you for your constant dedication to the students we serve— I hope to see you at the rally on May 6th as well as at our Annual Picnic in June. Have a beautiful fourth quarter with your students.

Yours in Solidarity,

Donna Walters

Erie 1 Professional Education Association President

Local 02055



SUNSHINE CELEBRATIONS

Grace Lawton Baby girl
Tom Leach Baby boy
Kyle Hooper Baby boy



Help us spread some sunshine to our EPEA family. To celebrate life events or to support our members in time of illness or loss, reach out to Melanie Kujawski, Sunshine Committee Chair.



EPEA SOCIAL EVENTS



EPEA PICNIC

When: Saturday, June 7, 2025

Where: Lancaster Place Shelter, Como Park
2220 Como Park Blvd, Lancaster, NY

Time: 11:30-4:00 p.m.

Cost: \$5.00 for individual EPEA member only;
\$10.00 per EPEA family

**RSVP through Google Form to
Elaine Rosina by 5/21/25**

Picnic Highlights: Catered by Carrubba's Chicken, Desserts by our own Baking/Pastry chefs at Potter CTE, Mini Silent Auction; 50/50 Drawing (proceeds to benefit the Breast Cancer Walk), Games, Horse-shoes and Family Fun! Playground nearby.

Park Specifics: Bring your own beer/wine – no glass bottles or balloons allowed please.



SAVE THE DATE

Our Annual Retirement & Holiday Event is

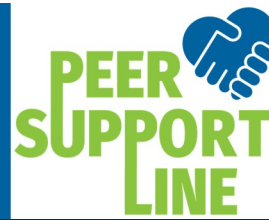
December 11, 2025,

at The Columns

Elma, NY



Life is complicated. Here's some help



Just call 1-844-444-0152

Peer specialists from the Peer Support are hosting a "**Road to Wellness**" webinar series that is running through June 2025. This series details steps that can be taken to improve wellness and resilience. All NYSUT members and their loved ones are welcome to attend.

Upcoming Webinars- Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 11 a.m.

Wednesday, June 4, 2025 at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

Register online-

<https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/free-member-benefits/road-to-wellness-webinar-series>

Need to relax?



NYSUT Member Benefits offers the **premium Calm subscription** as a free benefit for all NY-SUT in-service AND retiree members.

Members can add up to five **dependents** (age 16 or older) to receive their own premium Calm subscription. Dependents can only be added through the **calm.com** site (not the Calm app); dependents will then receive their own premium Calm subscription.



EPEA POLITICAL ACTION



WHAT: Rally to Fix Tier 6!

WHEN: Tuesday, May 6 • 5 - 6 p.m.

WHERE: Niagara Square
65 Niagara Sq., Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

WHY: Because we won't quit until we Fix Tier 6!

This year, we will be continuing to advocate for changes to the state pension system. We're making incremental changes to Tiers 5 and 6 so they reach parity with the benefits Tier 4 members enjoy.

Join NYSUT, other union members and elected officials as we stand in solidarity.

RSVP: nysut.cc/FT6wny



SCAN ME!



Want to share the exciting things happening in your classroom?

Email: btowle@e1b.org



VOTE-COPE VICTORIES



NYSUT 2024-2025 VICTORIES

Because of **VOTE-COPE**, these are some of the victories we've won together in the past year.



ELECTIONS 2024

ELECTED
4 PRO-PUBLIC SCHOOL CANDIDATES

to the US House of Representatives, including NYSUT member and former high school teacher John Mannion.

PASSED
PROP 1



Equal Rights in New York state.



SCHOOL BUDGET AND BOARD ELECTIONS

97%

of budgets passed.



84%

of pro-education, pro-student endorsed candidates

WON

73

NYSUT MEMBERS were elected or re-elected to school boards.

IN NEW YORK STATE

FOUNDATION AID INCREASED
\$430 MILLION

more than what was originally proposed.



RESTORED
THE MAJORITY OF

proposed cuts to public school funding.

SAVED
SUNY
DOWNSTATE



Secured
INCREASED FUNDING

for CUNY and SUNY campuses.

FIXED
APPR

to end test-and-punish teacher evaluations.



FIXES TO
TIER 6

lowered Final Average Salary calculation from five to three years.

FIRST-IN-THE-NATION

social media safety laws for minors.

\$4 MILLION

to expand hands-on CTE programs.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT

expanded to include schools.

SCHOOL HEAT REGULATIONS

passage of first law establishing max temps in schools.

\$10 MILLION

for Science of Reading professional development programs.

TOILETING & DIAPERING

regulations that set uniform standards.

REFORMS TO CIVIL SERVICE LAWS

removing barriers to career advancement.

Because of VOTE-COPE,

we were able to get all of this done for our students, educators and our public schools. This year, we are tackling even more important issues because of VOTE-COPE:

- Restrictions on digital distractions in schools.
- An updated Foundation Aid formula for properly funded public schools.
- Funding for BOCES and CTE programs.
- Fighting childhood poverty

and getting universal school meals.

- A new statewide educator tax credit for classroom purchases.
- Fighting at the bargaining table for good jobs, health-care and working conditions.

Learn more and support at VOTE-COPE.org





NYSUT members have access to programs and services from NYSUT Member Benefits that can help them save money, protect their family, and assist with planning for the future.

With our **Legal Service Plan**, you will receive crucial estate planning documents (Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Power of Attorney); free attorney consultations; and guaranteed maximum fees for personal legal matters. Plan participants receive guaranteed hourly rates along with discounted prices for referral attorneys.

Our **Financial Counseling Program** offers access to certified financial planners that provide fee-based financial counseling services. Participants can get help with retirement planning, 403(b) & 457(b) plan advice, debt management, savings, budgeting, and more.

Check out **Synchrony Bank** for some of today's most competitive interest rates on certificates of deposit, money market, and savings accounts. An optional automated savings program (which makes transfers from your checking account at another bank to your money market or savings account at Synchrony Bank) is an easy way to build your balances in higher-earning accounts.

Our online **Financial Learning Center - powered by Kiplinger's Personal Finance** – offers numerous articles designed to assist NYSUT members with achieving their personal financial goals and better understand the nuances of insurance, savings, investing, and more. This free resource is updated on a monthly basis.

Do you have student loan or general debt concerns? Our **Cambridge Credit Counseling program** is available at no cost to assist NYSUT members with better understanding general debt consolidation and student loan repayment options. Members can take part in a free consultation with a certified Cambridge counselor or sign up for a no-cost student loan debt webinar provided by Cambridge.

Take back your financial independence and protect your family for whatever the future may bring.

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



March/April 2025

COMPETITION CHAMP

Frank Rosiek shares that Luke Gworek his senior took 3rd Place at the American Welding Society competition. This allows Luke to compete in the NYS Thruway Cup Competition on May 3rd in Rochester. He will be competing against other students from Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. Best of luck Luke!



CLASSROOM CORNER

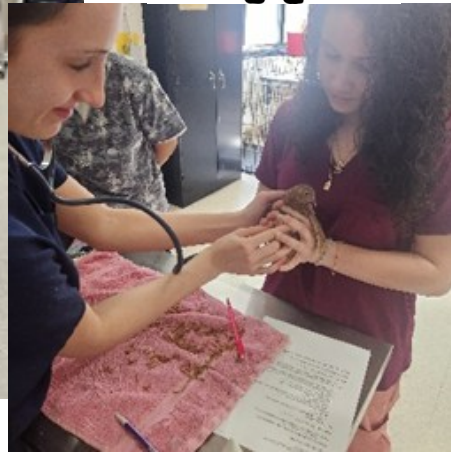
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Celebrating great things happening in our classrooms

## BUSY AT THE BINNER BLEND



Abigail Ruggles shares a pic of students in action. Kathryn Kelly, Steven Marasco, and Dylan Murphy work together at Maryvale Academy's Binner Blend Café to prepare waffles for customers. The Binner Blend Café is open every Wednesday - Friday from 8:00 to 9:00 am. This student-led café provides students with the opportunity to improve their vocational skills while serving their school community with delicious food!



## ANIMAL ANTICS

Jessica Sawyer's Potter Animal Science classroom has had loads of fun these past couple weeks exploring different species. We had goats and quail visit the classroom for students to practice physical exams and nail/hoof care.

## DEVELOPING HEALTHY HABITS

Julianne Weingarden shares that the K–2 team at Winchester learned all about healthy habits and how to fuel their bodies with fruits and vegetables. In each classroom, students practiced important life skills by helping to cut and prepare a variety of fruits and vegetables. Then, together in the cafeteria, they tasted everything they had made and shared whether they liked it or not.



We saw some funny faces during the taste tests—but even more smiles!

Classrooms: Weingarden,  
Wallace, Strong, Delmar,  
Lawton, Roland

## EXPLORING PLANT SCIENCE IN OUR NEW GREENHOUSE

Jen Kelly shares In an exciting new project, students in Miss Kelly's and Mrs. Simmens' science classes are diving into hands-on learning by testing the effects of various factors on garden plant growth. Using our brand-new greenhouse—purchased through a generous grant—students have been busy selecting their plants and designing experiments that explore how different variables impact plant development. The greenhouse provides a controlled environment where students can closely monitor their experiments, record data, and observe changes over time. At the conclusion of the school year students will have the opportunity to take their plant home and continue their observations strengthening their curiosity about the natural world. We're proud of their enthusiasm and look forward to seeing the results of their green-thumbed investigations!



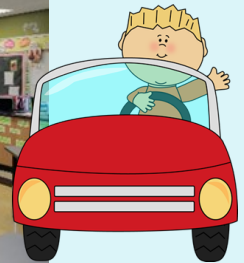
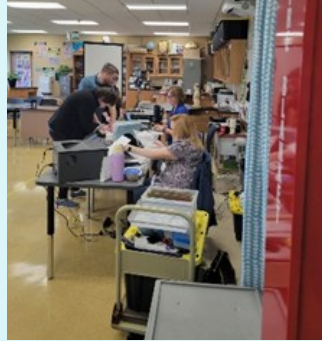


Follow on Facebook: [Erie 1 Professional Education Association](#)



Join us at: [Erie1Educators.org](http://Erie1Educators.org) for News and Resources

## ERIE COUNTY DMV AT MARYVALE ACADEMY



Melanie Kujawski arranged for the Erie County Mobile DMV Unit to speak with Maryvale Academy students about Real IDs, learner's permits, and getting their licenses. The Mobile Unit then returned a few weeks later to administer permit tests and process ID requests. Watch out- there are now 5 new, very excited, permit holders practicing on the roads!

Many families from both the NYSAA and Academic programs took advantage of the opportunity for non-driver ID cards, either basic or enhanced.



## DO OVER DOG TRAINING

Do Over Dog training visited the Potter CTE building and had students run a full scent detection trial. Public clients used our classroom, hallways, and office to time how quickly their dog could find the hidden scent of birchwood. Students hid, timed, scored, organized, and awarded prizes to the competing families. We are super lucky to have them as a business partner to give our students this amazing opportunity!



Enclosed in this newsletter is information for Erie 1 Professional Education Association members pertaining to union related news and events. If you have a story idea or suggestion, please e-mail it to Brenna Towle at [btowle@e1b.org](mailto:btowle@e1b.org).