

**Volume 38 Issue 2
June
2025**

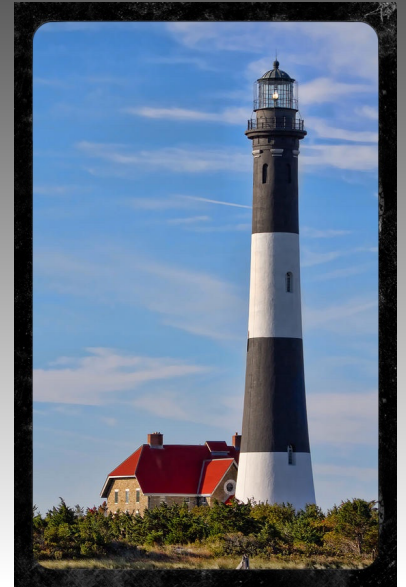
AFT Local 3037/ NYSUT Local 22-220

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



As we close out another school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on all that we have accomplished together and to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you. First and foremost, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to our colleagues who are retiring this year. Your dedication, passion, and tireless work have touched the lives of countless students, families, and fellow educators. You leave behind a legacy of excellence, compassion, and professionalism that will inspire generations to come. On behalf of the entire union, we thank you for your service and wish you health, happiness, and adventure in this next chapter of life.

This year has also been one of unity and achievement for our state and local unions. In partnership with NYSUT and AFT, we secured important improvements in working conditions, advanced our advocacy for fair and equitable funding, and strengthened our support networks for educators at every stage of their careers. Locally, we are committed to building on the momentum we've created through two excellent contracts and the hard-won recognition of additional years toward longevity for those members who may have worked in other capacities before teaching. In addition to our larger achievements, this year has brought many small but meaningful individual wins for our members—reminders that every success matters. Together, we will continue to advance fairness, respect, and opportunity for all our members. I am so proud of what we've accomplished—and even more excited about what lies ahead.

We were proud to offer some wonderful events and programs for our members and their families this year. Through the AFT's **Reading Opens the World** book grant, we provided thousands of books to our elementary programs—an incredible gift to our students. Our **Helping Hive** program brought holiday assistance to members in need during the season of giving. We came together for fun and community at our **LI Ducks game outing**, where over 300 BEES members and their families enjoyed a great night. We honored our retirees with a beautiful dinner and meaningful gifts, celebrating their years of dedication. There were also financial workshops, membership benefit seminars, new member meet and greets and other great offerings. We look forward to offering these events and more next year, and we hope you'll join us!

President - Asha Mazza-Shaw

Union Strong



As we head into summer, I hope each of you takes time to rest, recharge, and enjoy precious moments with family and friends. You have earned it. Our work is demanding, but it is also deeply meaningful—and it is sustained by the care we show for ourselves and one another.

I would like to thank Angela Ritchie for her years of service to the BEES union, she has been a great advocate for our para-educators and we wish her a fantastic retirement! Additionally, I would like to express gratitude to Kristin Ericson-Abbruzzese, who has served as a long time member of the Executive Board. Her dedication to our members and our union deserves our appreciation. Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve as the BEES union president, it is a role I approach with great respect and a deep commitment to representing and supporting all of you. I would also like to welcome Alissa Sorel and Donna Morey to the Executive Board. Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to providing the leadership, support, and representation that our members are accustomed to.

On behalf of the union's leadership team, I wish you all a safe, joyful, and well-deserved summer break. We look forward to seeing you again in the fall. Don't forget to join us for our Opening Day Zoom meeting on September 2, 2025. We will be sure to send out details as the new school year approaches, be sure to keep up with us on our socials and Remind!

Find us on Facebook under BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

Instagram @bocesbees22220

Please join our **Remind messaging system** so we can reach you quickly with important information. You can join by downloading the Remind app and searching for the keyword(s), or just by texting the keyword(s) to the number **81010**. Please use the keyword(s) for the groups that apply to you (you can belong to more than one if you would like to). Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions about getting started and welcome to the union!

Remind Key words

@beesblue - for Teachers, Itinerants, Certificated Staff

@beesparas - for aides and TAs

@beessped - for all special ed. members




Politics in Education




BOCES AND CTE FUNDING

Our advocacy secured funding for these highly sought-after programs to ensure more students have access.



FOUNDATION AID


This year, we submitted a series of recommendations on fixing the formula, and members turned out in force at hearings to testify on behalf of students.



Plus, we secured nearly \$1.4 billion over last year in state aid in this year's budget.

DISTRACTION-FREE SCHOOLS

Our advocacy secured a statewide bell-to-bell cellphone policy after convening countless educators, students and more at regional conferences across New York.



This is a huge victory for our students' academic and mental development.

Politics in Education

End of legislative session brings big wins for union-backed initiatives

THE FREEDOM TO READ

Our advocacy secured the Freedom to Read Act to empower school libraries and staff to develop varied, age-appropriate collections.



THE POWER OF PLAY

Our advocacy secured a new statewide survey of recess in K-6 schools.

Recess isn't a break from learning; it's how kids learn.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our advocacy secured \$21.4 million for New York's 124 Teacher Centers because when it comes to teaching, teachers know best.



UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS

Our advocacy secured universal meals for all New York students, regardless of their household income.

Hungry students can't learn.



Executive Vice President - Al Rios

We Appreciate You



Dear Eastern Suffolk BOCES Educators,

As we reflect on the past months, it feels like just yesterday we were unpacking boxes and setting up our classrooms for another year of growth and learning. Before we know it, we will welcome a brand-new group of students eager to embark on their educational journeys. But before that, let us take a moment to cherish the amazing summer that awaits us!

As we wrap up the 2024-2025 school year, it's time to organize our end-of-year celebrations and begin packing up our classrooms. Together, as educators, we have achieved so much. I urge you to recognize the strength and potential we possess as the BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk. As one of the largest local unions on Long Island, our collective strength and influence are remarkable. I am grateful to each member who has prioritized unity and commitment to our union.

I also want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for allowing me the privilege to serve as your Executive Vice President. Your trust in me with your questions and concerns has been invaluable. Regardless of whether this is your 30th year or your first, your voices matter, and your concerns deserve recognition. It is essential that we continue to strive for changes that will benefit all our members. Together, with your support and involvement, I am confident we can maintain a positive trajectory.

To our retirees, thank you for your unwavering service and dedication. It was a true honor to celebrate you at this year's retiree dinner. As you embark on this new chapter in your lives, I wish you all the best that life has to offer. You deserve every good thing this world can provide. Congratulations, and I hope to see you at future BEES functions.

Finally, I wish all our members a very happy and healthy summer vacation. It was a wonderful experience to change up our end-of-year celebrations and spend it with more than 300 members and their families at the Long Island Ducks baseball and barbecue event. Our hope is to offer more family events like this. Now it is time to relax and reflect on all you have accomplished and the positive impact you have had on countless lives. Remember, our strength lies in our unity. It is crucial that our numbers within the union remain robust; any decline could adversely affect our members and the vital work we do.

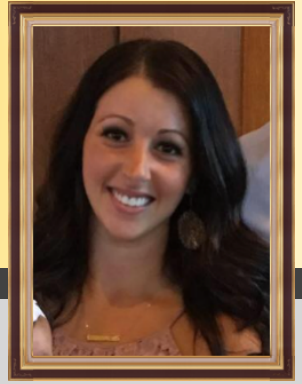
Congratulations on a successful school year! I look forward to seeing all of you in September.

Warm regards,

Al Rios

~ Al Rios

Executive Vice President - Amanda Pica



Better Together

It's hard to believe another year has passed.... wow did that go fast. As I reflect back on this past year I am proud of the great work and accomplishments that have come from our e-board and members. We as a union have set a high standard and always seem to come out on top. I would like to shed light on an event that took place this year that really helped our members, this was our Toys for Tots drive. Not only did this help our members but it helped their families as well. The amount of donations we received was enough to help every family in need. If it wasn't for our e-board and members this would not have been possible. I look forward to helping even more families next year. I want to thank each and everyone one of you for making it such a huge success. With only a few days left I encourage you to take some time for yourself and enjoy the sunshine with family and friends, you can't pour from an empty cup. I want to wish the retirees the best of luck in this new chapter, especially one of our own Angela Ritchie. You have been such a vital part of our union and e-board for many years, we wish you nothing but the best!! You will be truly missed. I hope you all have a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you in September

~ Amanda





LET MEMBER BENEFITS HELP YOU PLAN FOR RETIREMENT

If you recently retired or plan to do so in the near future, it's important to prepare for the transition from in-service work to retirement.

Maintaining NYSUT membership in retirement is crucial, especially if you're currently participating in a NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed program(s) and would like to continue doing so. This can be accomplished in one of two ways:

- 1** Continue membership within your local if retiree membership is offered. Contact your local to find out if any retiree membership requirements are in place. You must comply with these requirements to continue your membership in NYSUT along with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA).
- 2** Continue as an at-large member of NYSUT through the Retiree Council in your region. Contact your local to ensure you will be reported as retired to NYSUT. This will provide you with membership in the Retiree Council in your region along with NYSUT, AFT, and NEA. If you have questions about maintaining NYSUT membership or would like more information about NYSUT retiree programs, you will want to contact the NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant serving your region. You can find this information at nysut.cc/retireeconsultants.

More than a dozen of the endorsed programs offered by Member Benefits can be purchased through either payroll or pension deduction. These convenient payment methods offer reduced premiums or the elimination of service fees in many instances. An active NYSUT membership is required to participate in payroll or pension deduction. If you're currently participating in one (or more) of our endorsed programs, we encourage you to look into switching to pension deduction after you enter retirement.

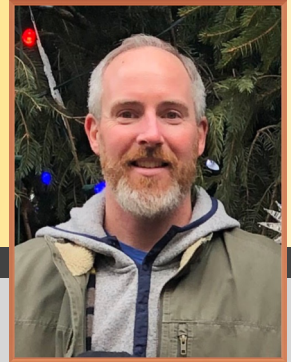
Learn more about continuing Member Benefits-endorsed programs or the pension deduction process by scanning the QR code, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.



May/June 2025

First Vice President - Keith Flynn

Your Voice, Your Union



Summertime is only weeks away as we get ready to finish up another successful school year and celebrate all of our retirees, colleagues and friends who will be starting their next journey after working at Eastern Suffolk BOCES. I would like recognize and celebrate Angela Ritchie who has served on the Executive Board and will be retiring. Thank you, Angela! Also, I want to thank Kristin-Ericson-Abbruzzese and Dana Sayers who have served on the Executive Board. As well as welcoming our newly elected Executive Board members, Alissa Sorel and Donna Morey.

Before we break for the summer, please remember if you plan on retiring within the next 5 years there are PREP seminar meetings that you can register to take. NYSTRS designed the Pension & Retirement Education Program to help members plan for retirement. See below where to find a summer schedule for those meetings.

Retirement Planning/Pension & Retirement Education Program page at nystrs.org.

As you have probably read by now, 122 of the 124 school board budgets have passed for next year. This is not only great for your local school district, but passed budgets mean districts will have the funding to send their students to BOCES. On May 20 th , members all over the island came out to vote and share their voice on local school budgets. Shelter Island, Hicksville & Elwood had sought to pierce their tax caps which require 60% of voter majority. Only Hicksville was successful in doing so.

Overall, NYS school aid will increase by 4.9% for next year. The NYS also includes a guaranteed minimum 2% increase in Foundation Aid for every school district. Some NYSUT highlights for next year:

- 1) Universal Free School Meals which will provide free meals to all students regardless of income.
- 2) Distraction Free Schools-Assist schools in implementing policy to restrict the use of smartphones during school hours.
- 3) Expansion of CTE & BOCES Programs-Changes to BOCES and Special Services Aid funding will allow for expansion of Career and Technical Education Programs.
- 4) Dual Enrollment Policy-61 million in funding is in place to help high school students participate in dual enrollment programs so they can earn college credit while in high school.

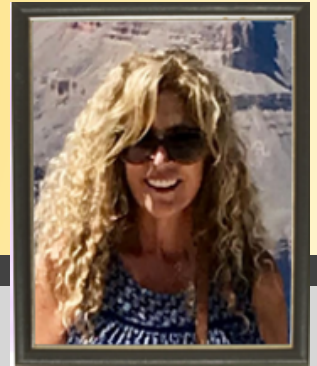
Whether you are retiring, working summer school or just taking the summer off; I hope you all have a wonderful and restful summer. Soak up some sunshine and enjoy!!!!

Keith Flynn
First Vice President



Area VP for Para Educators - Angela Ritchie

Amazing SRPs



Dear Fellow Bees Members,

As this school year is coming to an end, I want to thank everyone for their support and commitment to our Union.

You are dedicated Educators who go above and beyond the daily requirements of your positions. Our students are lucky to be surrounded by such caring people. I also want to thank all the incredible Para Building Reps. They have constantly kept me in touch with your concerns and issues and work hard to make sure you receive important information and in return we hear what is important to you.

Lastly, I want to thank this dynamic Board that I have been a part of for the last several years. You have shown strength and determination even at some really tough times. You support each other and are always willing to go the extra mile to make sure our members are treated fairly and their contractual rights are never violated. I will miss working with all of you.

It has been an honor and privilege to represent all of you!

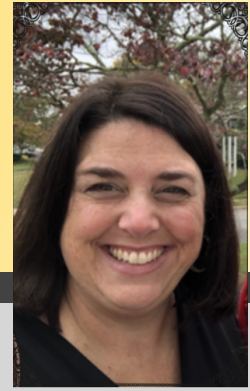
Sincerest regards,

Angela Ritchie



Area VP for Special Education - Dana Sayers

Union Strong All Day Long



As we begin to end the school year, I would like to thank the E-Board for all of their support and guidance as I took over the role of Area VP for Special Education. This has been a year of growth, learning so much while advocating for our members and I couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you to all the building reps for your patience while I researched (and emailed Asha lol) to get answers to your questions. You are a very dedicated group and your members are lucky to have you!

For the moment that we all have been waiting for... the blue contract is printed and ready to be distributed. Please reach out to your building reps to get your copy.

Congratulations to those that are retiring. Thank you for your commitment to the agency and to the students that we serve! Enjoy this new chapter in your life!

Finally, good luck to Alissa Sorel as she will be the new Area VP for Special Education.

Wishing everyone a wonderful and relaxing summer!

Dana

Area VP for Itinerants/SAS - Kristin Ericson Abbruzzese



Things to Remember

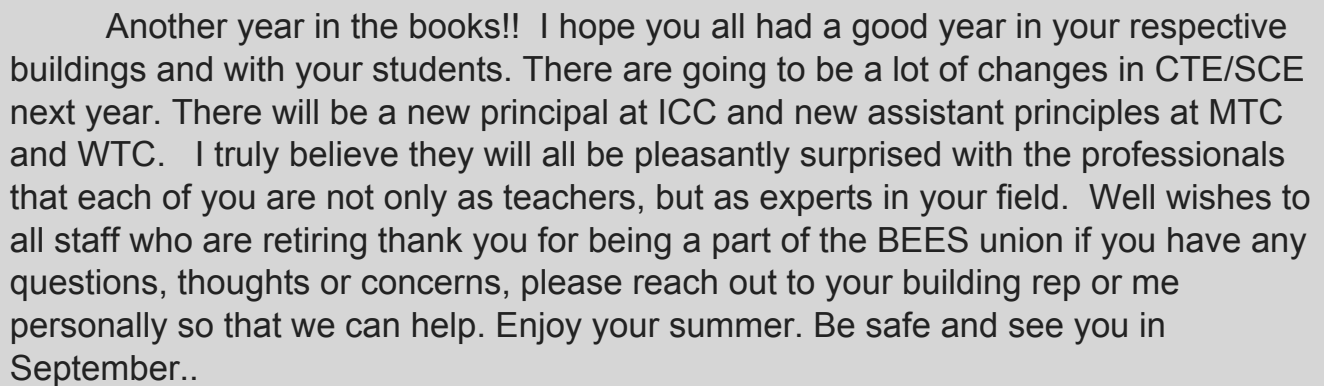
I cannot believe another school year is coming to a close. Like most years for myself, it seems very busy, at times even be overwhelming, and then before you know it the birds are chirping and Spring is here. I want to start off by wishing nothing but the best for all of our retiring members who may be having mixed emotions of leaving their ESBOCES family. You will all be greatly missed and are much appreciated for all your hard work and dedication to a rewarding but often very challenging career. On the other end, it is such an honor and pleasure to have so many new members finish out another year with our ESBOCES family and BEES union.

I would like to remind all those related service providers who are entitled to the stipend for your license to make sure you check your paycheck that you did receive the increased amount of \$800.00. Just a reminder, you do not have to send in a copy of your license each year; you only have to send in a copy when your license is expiring and you receive the new one. You will only receive this stipend if you have the qualifying credentials and a copy of your most current license is on record with Human Resources. Please refer to the contract if you are not sure if you qualify.

I would like to also remind members is that we encourage you to reach out if you have had any negative ratings and/or comments on your observations or evaluations. The administrator who completed the report should have had a conversation with you both before and after the completion of your assessment so you are aware of any issues and how you can make improvements. Please don't forget you have the right to write a rebuttal should you not agree with either these reports. That rebuttal is permanently on the report when you leave it in the comments area. As per the contract you have to "acknowledge" the evaluation which only means that you are acknowledging you received the evaluation not that you necessarily agree with it. Please reach out to your union representative should you find yourself in a situation with a poor assessment.

Thank you for all the years of allowing me to represent you on the Executive Board. It has been an honor and pleasure to be able to assist many members over the years whether it just be a listening ear, supportive phone call or chair next to you at Human Resources. I strongly appreciate all those members who have also supported me over the years in this role, as a building representative and a colleague. Have a great summer and enjoy some rest and relaxation.

Success!

[illegible]

Membership Coordinator - Adrian Grube

A Happy Hive



Wow, saying this year flew by feels like an understatement!

I hope everyone had the chance to enjoy the new events organized by our fantastic Social Chair, Danielle. I heard the Ducks game was a great success, even though I couldn't attend, I'm already looking forward to joining next year!

As summer begins, please remember that important work continues behind the scenes. From strengthening our own union to pushing for state level change, like fixing Tier 6, we're still moving forward, advocating for what matters most to all of us.

Our unity is our strength, and with that strength, we'll keep building a better future for our students, our profession, and our community.

A heartfelt congratulations to all of our retirees, your impact will be felt for years to come. Wishing each and every one of you a joyful, restful, and well-deserved summer.

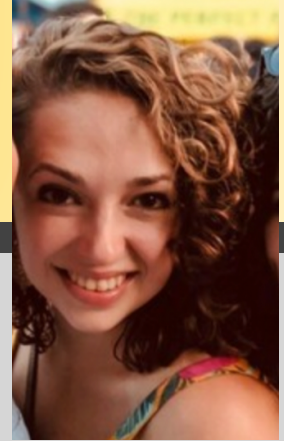
See you in September!

Adrian



Treasurer - Rachael Klahn

Budgeting the BEES



Congratulations to everyone on another wonderful year! This time of year is always bittersweet as we say goodbye to our students and retirees while we celebrate the start of summer. I hope that we all enjoy these last few weeks of the 2024-2025 school year with the students and our colleagues!

We had the opportunity to plan different events this year, as well as try different initiatives, and spend time with more of you than in years past. Hopefully next year we will build upon this and reach even more of the membership!

This school year may be over, but we will continue our union work over the summer. Our mission is always to represent, protect, guide, and give back to the members. I look forward to seeing some of you during summer school and wish everyone a safe, fun, and memorable summer! See you all in September!

Rachael



Grievance Officer - Tiffany Robinson

Enjoy the Summer!

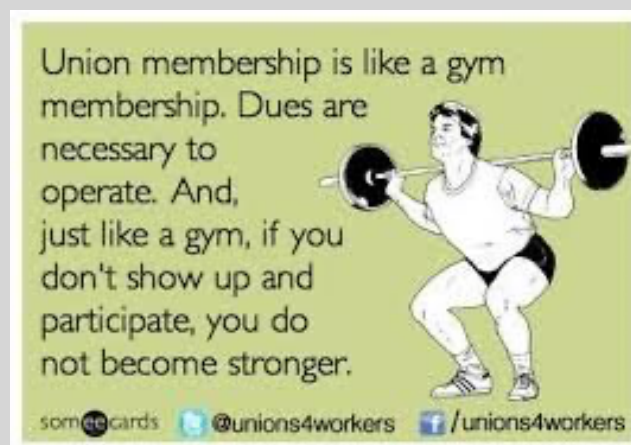


Hello fellow BEES members! It's hard to believe that another school year has come and gone. I am hoping that it was a school year that brought about growth and progress and was a good one for all! Congratulations to our retirees, thank you for all of your dedication throughout the years. I wish you all good health and happiness as you enter this next chapter in your lives.

Together as a union we stayed strong, supported each other, and made real progress. The strength of our union lies in our unity, so it is very important that our members stay involved and informed. Your executive board is dedicated to their members and makes continuous efforts to go above and beyond for its membership.

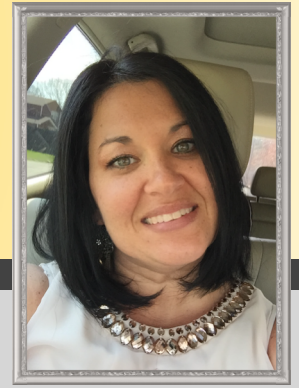
I am very excited to be starting in my new position as the Area Vice President for the yellow contract being there to work alongside all the amazing building reps to help navigate challenges and keep pushing forward together. As we close out the year, I encourage all of our members to stand by your union, stay active, ask questions and use the resources that are available to everyone. Thank you for standing by your union. I hope that everyone has a happy healthy summer and enjoys the break ahead.

Tiffany



Social Chair - Danielle Ibba-Morabito

Let's BEE Social



Another year, we made it, great job everyone! The summer will fly by and before we know it, it will be time to start the 24-25 school year. Don't rush it, take time to recharge and enjoy the journey you are on. For some of us, the end of this school year means new beginnings, whether in a new building or new position or you are at the end of a wonderful career, and you are heading down that path of retirement. For those of you finishing up your first year with Eastern Suffolk BOCES, I hope the year was a great success! We would like to wish you all a safe, happy and restful summer.

To those members of the BEES that are retiring, we wish you a happy and healthy retirement. We, of course, welcome your membership under your new hard-earned title of "retiree". Please check our web page: <http://www.beesbeacon.org/> regularly and the Bees Facebook page. The retiree list with some great pictures from the retirement party will be up and there is always information that might be useful.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the ducks game. We anticipate an even greater turnout next year. The picnic and ducks game attracted approximately 310 attendees, affording us an excellent chance to come together and meet each other's families.

This summer, the Patchogue Theater will feature several exceptional shows. Remember to use our discount code, BEES25, when purchasing tickets.

Welfare: The loss of a loved one is an emotional time, and one of the worst things we may go through in life. It is with that thought that we would like to reach out to our families in need in a timely manner. There are guidelines for sending out cards or a small token to the family of a member. In the past I have gotten several requests that I was not able to send out in a timely manner because the guidelines below were not adhered to. Please make sure that you include all of the information listed below so that we may pay our respects to the families in their time of need. Thank you.

Guidelines for welfare: A bereavement card will be sent in the event of a member's spouse, parent, child, or sibling's death. In the case of a member passing, special circumstances will then apply. The procedure for a sympathy card to be sent is as follows: Members should contact their building representative as soon as they believe a member meets the above guidelines and a bereavement card should be sent. The building representative should contact me via email at daniellesocialchairbees@gmail.com with the member's name, address as well as the name and relation to the deceased. In the event it is a member that has passed, I still need their name, address and a home or cell number of a member of their family so that we can acknowledge their service with us in a special way. If you need more information, see your building rep, check out our BEES website or feel free to me an email.

Have a great summer!

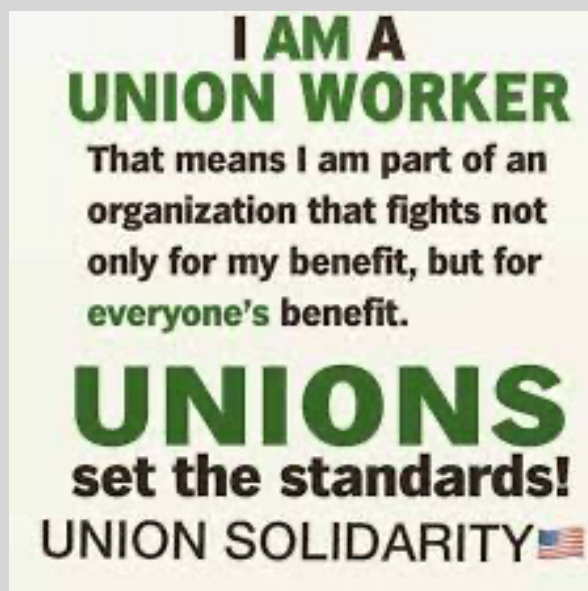
Danielle

Nice Notes



Hello my fellow union Brothers and Sisters, I hope you all had a good school year, we now get a chance to rest up this summer. We all could look forward to our next school year, and remember we all stand union strong. When we stand united, I will always make time to answer and help all my fellow union Brothers and Sisters.

Fraternally yours Mariane Zioba Longabardi



Retiree Chapter Chairperson - Terry Kalb

Radiant Retirees



When you retire from ES BOCES you may think that your union years are behind you, but actually, you should be UNION FOR LIFE! Why? Your hard earned pension and benefits, Social Security, Medicare and those premium reimbursements are not all cemented in place. There are always political and economic pressures that put them at risk for reductions. In fact, political attacks on public education can impact future union negotiations and can impact retiree benefits. It is our union, even in our retirement, that strengthens our collective voices and protects our pension fund and benefits. A \$35 annual fee gives you BEES membership in our Retiree Chapter - and the first year of that membership is free - the BEES gift to you when you provide us with your email and contact information. The membership allows you access to all the additional programs and benefits you can view on the nysut.org.benefits website. It gives you representation and advocacy on the BEES Executive Board, and support when you have benefits questions or other related issues that may arise in retirement. So, take your union with you into retirement and be UNION FOR LIFE!

Please send your personal email and contact information to me at terrykalb@yahoo.com, or if you do not have an email, send your mailing address to me at Terry Kalb, PO Box 798, Wading River, NY 11792. You will no longer be able to use your ES BOCES email because it will disappear on your last day of work. the email you provide will only be used for union communication and never be given to any third party. With your enrollment in our Retiree Chapter you will receive a newsletter and invitation to our fall and spring retiree meetings. We also provide a Zoom link for our meetings so even if you head somewhere warm, you can still stay connected with your union!

Best wishes for a happy and healthy summer!

Stay well, and stay connected!

Terry Kalb

BEES Retiree Chapter President

Retiree Chapter Chairperson - Terry Kalb

Radiant Retirees



Name _____ Local # _____
Address _____ Member ID # _____
(optional)

- ☐ I belong to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS)
☐ I belong to the New York State Employees' Retirement System (NYSERS)

**Please read and sign
the reverse side.**

I hereby request monthly withholding of union deductions from my monthly benefit as permitted by Section 536 of the Education Law and Section 110-b of the Retirement and Social Security Law. NYSTRS or NYSERS is authorized to continue taking such deduction until NYSUT receives written notice from me to the contrary. I understand that NYSUT VOTE-COPE is my agent and all requests to begin, modify or revoke deductions must be submitted through NYSUT VOTE-COPE.

Please provide your email address: _____

Retiree Chapter Chairperson - Terry Kalb

Radiant Retirees



SAVE THE DATE!

Long Island NYSUT Retiree Conferences

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Marriott Melville Long Island
1350 Walt Whitman Road, Melville, NY 11747

OR

Thursday, October 16, 2025

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Residence Inn By Marriot, Long Island East End
2012 Old Country Road, Riverhead, NY 11901

Please save the date and plan to join us for (one or the other, not both) a Retiree Conference, featuring sessions on Health and Wellness, Legal/Financial planning, Peer Support, and much more! The Conferences will be essentially identical. It does not matter where a retiree lives as to which conference they attend.

**REGISTRATION FORMS AND MORE INFORMATION
WILL BE MAILED TO ALL RETIREES LATER THIS SUMMER.**

Questions?

Jim Kinnier, Retiree Services Consultant, Suffolk Regional Office
James.Kinnier@nysut.org 631-273-8822

Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Our BEES events!



BEES IN THEIR

TEES



BEES IN THEIR

TEES

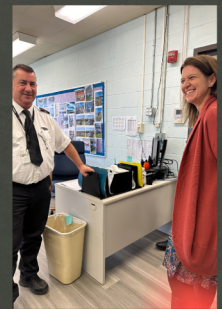


Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Our BEES events!



Special
visit with
NYSUT
President
Melinda
Person



Special
visit with
NYSUT
President
Melinda
Person

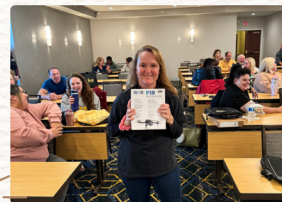


Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Our BEES events!



BEES Rep Training



BEES Rep Training

Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Our BEES events!



NYSUT BUS TOUR

Common Ground Over Chaos

**COMMON
GROUND**
OVER CHAOS

nysut



One job should be enough.

**NYSUT
REPRESENTATIVE
ASSEMBLY**



Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Our BEES events!



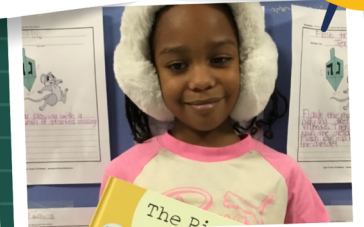
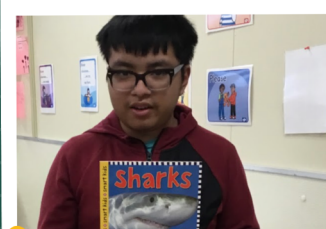
Spotlight on Our BEES Community

Our BEES events!

BEES/AFT BOOK GIVE AWAY



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BEES Retiree Celebration



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BEES Retiree Celebration



Congratulations Retirees!



BEES

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

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