

Inside this issue:

Member Wellness	2
Know your Contract	2
Shared Success	3
Member Benefits	4

Supporting All Of Our Members

Thank you to those who responded to our member survey earlier this Fall. The results will help inform our actions moving forward. We also shared a summary of the results with the Questar administration who, as you know, sent out their own survey at roughly the same time.

Our results showed that our members find value in the work that they do in a number of ways but almost universally

members indicated the ability to work with and impact student outcomes as the most rewarding aspect of their job. Over 90% also indicated feeling supported by their colleagues, underscoring how important it is for us to support one another. This feeling of support decreases as the amount of direct contact decreases. Respondents feel most supported by their immediate colleagues, then within their program, then their department, and then Questar overall. This results in half the respondents feeling unvalued in their role.

We know that feeling valued and supported looks different to everyone, but there are some common threads such as level of autonomy, communication, the degree to which student behaviors are addressed, and monetary compensation.

For the past 6 months we have been focused on longevity pay as a way to retain employees and thank them for their many years of dedicated service. This work has been frustrating at times and is ongoing. We know that this is just one way for our members to feel valued and supported. We continue to work with the administration on several fronts, attempting to improve working conditions, program functioning and student outcomes. Several of you have made your thoughts known to us and to members of the administration on longevity pay and other issues. It takes all of us working together to make a difference.

A union works together to address the needs of everyone, even when it doesn't directly impact them. Our newer members supporting longevity pay for years of service is an example of this. Another is those of us in Tier 4 of the NYS

Teachers Retirement System supporting the FIX TIER 6 campaign, aimed at correcting the inequities that our newest Tier 6 members will face. This includes Tier 6 members paying a higher contribution to the retirement system for the duration of their employment. In addition, they will need to work much longer than those in Tier 4 and their final retirement salary will be a smaller percentage of their earnings.

There is growing support around the state, and by members of the NYS Legislature to correct these inequities and bring Tier 6 in line with Tier 4. To find out more, or to become involved in the solution, visit <https://fixtier6.org/>. As we approach the midpoint in the school year, I hope that you have some time to reflect on the value you bring to your work, and the role that we can all play in supporting one another.

In solidarity,
Joal Bova, President, RCG BOCES Teachers' Association

We want to make sure that you are getting all that you can out of your membership. Make sure you are receiving communications from us through a personal email. Check out our website at <http://rcgboces.ny.aft.org/>. Follow us on Twitter, @BocesReg. If you have not already created an online account do so at www.NYSUT.org. Our Local is RCG BOCES Teachers' Association and we are Local 10175. Once you log in you will have access to a variety of membership benefits.



Your status as a NYSUT in-service or retiree member allows you to participate in dozens of endorsed programs and services

offered by NYSUT Member Benefits. Our goal is to offer quality [insurance](#), [legal](#), and [financial](#) programs to members along with true [savings opportunities](#) to help maximize every dollar possible. Many of these programs include value-added benefits not available to the public.

The group buying power of more than 600,000 members generates meaningful savings on its own for the NYSUT membership. Members can also save up to 20% more (along with the elimination of service fees) by taking advantage of either [payroll or pension deduction](#) if available. Using these payment options can assist with budgeting since premiums are divided into smaller payments deducted from your paycheck or monthly pension benefit.

Member Benefits also offers members a variety of [educational opportunities](#), including financial assistance, legal education, and home buying workshops. You can learn more about these by contacting your [regional Member Benefits Coordinator](#).

Participation in our endorsed programs offers the added protection of having a trusted advocate on your side. Our staff take great pride in stepping in to support members with any questions or concerns that may arise.

True savings opportunities

Member Benefits believes in the importance of supporting local businesses while helping members save on everyday purchases. There is no cost for NYSUT members to participate in our [MB Discounts & Deals program](#), which offers approximately 21,000 local deals throughout New York State at a variety of merchants and businesses.

Members can save up to 50% at 850,000 locations across the country, including restaurant dine-in or take-out, groceries and food delivery, clothing and shoes, oil changes and vehicle maintenance, theme parks and movie tickets, hotels and flights, car rentals, and much more.

Member Benefits endorses other [shopping, travel & personal programs](#) that can offer savings on new and used vehicles, appliances and furniture, school and office supplies, heating oil and propane, medical alert systems, and hearing aids.

About Member Benefits

NYSUT created a [separately funded trust](#) in 1983 (Member Benefits Trust) to leverage the unified buying power of its members and offer competitive benefit programs to members. Subsequently, the Member Benefits Corporation and Catastrophe Major Medical Insurance Trust were created in 2008 and 2015, respectively, to add to the breadth of offerings.

In addition to voluntary programs available for purchase by members, Member Benefits also endorses [group plans](#) available for purchase by a local association, its benefit fund or the employer.

No NYSUT dues dollars are used to support Member Benefits. Instead, Member Benefits receives funds to cover expenses from [negotiated endorsement arrangements](#) with many of our endorsed program providers (including, in some cases, a percentage of premium paid). Member dues dollars are never used in conjunction with Member Benefits.

Member Benefits revenue is used, where appropriate, to enhance benefit programs, maintain competitive rates, and allow for the development of new offerings for the NYSUT membership. These funds are also used to defray the costs of operating Member Benefits, including staff compensation; rent; office expenses; and the cost of retaining consultants, auditors, and attorneys to advise the trustees, directors, and staff.

Learn more

NYSUT members can learn more about our benefit and savings opportunities by exploring memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling 800-626-8101. Members are encouraged to join our [Member Alert Program \(MAP\)](#) email service, which allows them to learn about new endorsed programs, changes to existing programs, and special prize drawings.

Although some NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs may provide legal or financial advice, Member Benefits itself does not offer investment, legal, or tax advice. Participants should consult their own investment, legal, financial, and tax advisors to assist them with an evaluation of these voluntary benefit programs.

Find more information here:
<https://www.nysut.org/members/member-guide/member-benefits>

The arrival of December with all its seasonal hustle and bustle also means that the start of the New Year will be upon us soon. After all the holiday indulgences, many of us may look to January as a time for re-focus on our health and well-being.

So in 2024, instead of the same old "I'm going to lose 10 pounds", "I'm going to exercise more" "I'm going to eat more veggies", (all good ideas but..), why not try something new?

Tai Chi, Qigong, the Feldenkrais Method

Back in the 1960s-1970s, when yoga was first being introduced in the United States, many viewed it as some far-out, hippie exotic practice. Now, it is so mainstream that millions have tried it, (from grandmas to your family pets!), and enjoy the many health benefits of this practice.

Other practices are not as well known, but are becoming more popular, especially as they include exercises and movements, like yoga, that can be practiced by people of any ages and abilities, and can be continued over a lifetime.

Tai Chi is a Chinese practice that was originally for self-defense (the definition of the term means "shadow boxing") that uses slow, intentional, even movements for health, well-being, relaxation, posture and balance. An article from Harvard Medical School says although it is defined as "meditation in motion", that could be changed to "*meditation in motion*". For more information, (and to try free online classes) visit: taichifoundation.org

Qigong (pronounced "chi gong") is also a traditional Chinese practice with exercises to improve energy, health and well-being, also with smooth gentle movements and focus on breathing. For more information on Qigong, visit nccih.nih.gov, the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, part of the US Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health.

The Feldenkrais Method - this one is new to me also! It is a method using gentle movement and directed attention to help with ease and range of motion, flexibility, coordination. It is not an exercise program per se, but somatic education, based on research

in neuroscience, biomechanics, physics, to help improve "how you move through life". More information is available at feldenkrais.com.

Important Note: Obviously, if you have any health concerns, you should check with your health care professional before starting any new practice.

Special Note: There are many FREE and/or VIRTUAL classes and workshops available for any of these practices, so you don't have to spend any money or leave the comfort of home! Start by checking on YouTube or the websites of your local libraries. Also, for a more "mature" cohort, many workshops are available at AlbanyGuardianSociety.org. Our local community colleges also have classes (with tuition) in their Adult/Community Education classes.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season, and a new year filled with good health and well-being!

~Mari Warfel, Member Wellness Coordinator

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

ARTICLE 6- SALARY

6.1 Salary

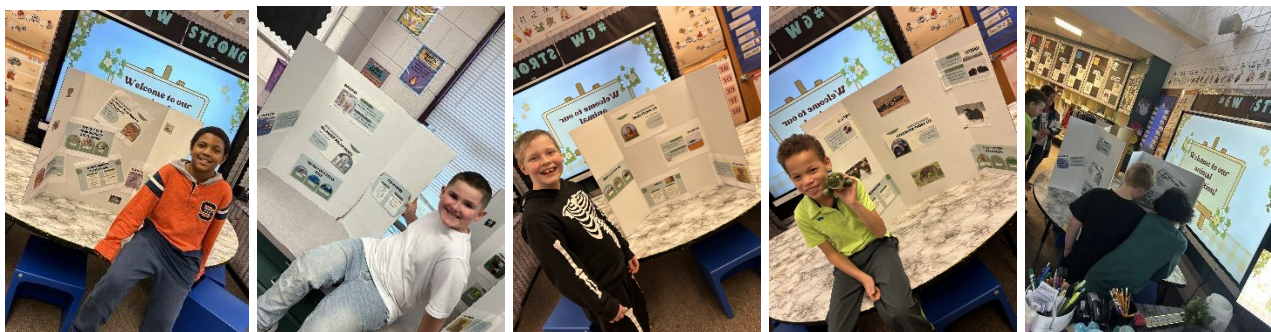
- A. The Teachers salary schedule is increased to 27 steps as set forth effective July 1, 2021, July 1, 2022, July 1, 2023, July 1 2024, and July 1, 2025 is attached hereto as **Appendix B-1**. Step movement if eligible each year.
- B. The Continuing Education salary schedule as set forth effective July 1, 2021, July 1, 2022, July 1 2023, July 1, 2023, July 1, 2024, and July 1, 2025 is attached hereto as **Appendix B-2**. Step movement, if eligible each year.
- C. Teachers in Year 4 and 5 who are not entitled to a step movement shall receive 1.8% increase on their base salary each year.
- D. Continuing Education Teachers in Year 1-5 who are not entitled to a step movement shall receive a 4% increase on their base salary each year.

“When you’re in a position to have gotten so much, the gift at this point is giving back.” -Paul Stanley

George Washington School has been a busy place with a lot happening so far this year. Service-Learning Projects, initiated by intermediate teacher Ms. Hunter, have the entire school giving back. In October students created Busy Boo Bags, which were stuffed with Halloween activities for children at Ronald McDonald House. In November, students created crafts and thank you cards that were distributed to Veterans as well as a Thanksgiving Food Drive for Veterans and families in need. In both December and January, students and staff will be raising money for the Make-a-Wish Foundation to support children in the capital region.



The students in Mrs. MacDonald's class worked hard in the month of November to sharpen their research skills. Students had the opportunity to choose an animal and then research that animal's habitat, diet, physical characteristics, and some fun facts! Once their research was complete, students learned how to use their notes to create complete sentences and used iPads to create final drafts of their reports. After spending time preparing for their presentations, Room 7 invited classes in for a special presentation of each research project! A Q&A session was held after the presentations, allowing Room 7 students another opportunity to showcase even more knowledge about their chosen animal! Great job room 7!



Being ready for the holidays can mean a lot of different things:

- Gifts for your loved ones
- Appliances for your home
- Confirming travel plans
- Entertainment for the kids
- Food delivery in case of inclement weather
- Savings set aside for unexpected expenses

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs and services that could help make you as prepared as possible for whatever the holiday season may throw at you.

No matter what your plans may be this holiday season, NYSUT Member Benefits is a great place to start. With a number of shopping, travel and discount programs, you are certain to find something of interest that could benefit you or your loved ones.

Speaking of savings, the **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program utilizes the nation's largest private discount network to offer all NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) exclusive access to savings of up to 50% at 850,000 locations – including more than 21,200 New York State deals. If you have not already done so, head over to mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com to create your account with your NYSUT ID number, preferred email address, and password.

You'll then be eligible to save on restaurant dine-in or take-out, flowers and gift baskets, Bose products, clothing and shoes, oil changes and vehicle maintenance, sporting events, hotels and flights, car rentals, theme parks, movie tickets, and much more. Members are encouraged to download the MB Discounts & Deals mobile app for the best user experience with this program.

Member Benefits also endorses life insurance programs, auto & home insurance, dental & vision plans, legal & financial services, and other programs to help protect yourself and those you care about most.

Participating in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also offers the added protection of having a trusted advocate on your side. Member Benefits staff take great pride in stepping in to support members with any questions, concerns, or issues that may arise.

Explore all that your union membership has to offer!



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, 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. Nov/Dec, 2023